



# Mentor Housing Study & Needs Analysis

# CONTENTS

01	INTRODUCTION	4
02	DEVELOPMENT DRIVERS	14
03	DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	38
04	MARKET INDICATORS	56
05	INVENTORY	68
06	GAP ANALYSIS	77
07	NEEDS	91
08	STRATEGIES	102
09	APPENDIX	117



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## **Mentor City Council**

Sean P. Blake, President  
John A. Krueger, Vice President  
Matthew E. Donovan  
Mark T. Freeman  
Scott J. Marn  
Janet A. Dowling  
Ray Kirchner

## **Mentor City Administration & Staff**

Kenneth J. Filipiak, *City Manager*  
Robert Fowler, *Assistant City Manager*  
Kathleen Cantanzriti, *Planning Director*  
Larry Rastatter, *Planner*  
John McFarland, *Planner / Landscape Architect*  
Kaela Ciancibello, *Planner*

## **Stantec Consulting Team**

Steve Kearney, *Principal in Charge*  
Tom Leighton, *Project Manager*  
Spencer Cox  
Alanna Wittet  
Kristin Baldonado  
Kribashini Moorthy  
Jaylon Smallwood

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**01**  
**INTRODUCTION AND  
EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

## Study Overview

**Mentor.** Mentor is a suburban city northeast of Cleveland on the shore of Lake Erie. It is in high demand as a place to live, and it is economically vibrant with more people coming to work in Mentor businesses than commute out from Mentor to work elsewhere.

Mentor's desirable neighborhoods and strong economy are in many ways a benefit to the community. But they also result in some housing challenges. It's difficult to buy into the community. Homes that go on the market are snapped up quickly, and the prices of homes become out of reach for many. Rents for homes and apartments have also risen quite precipitously. Mentor's business community, among others, would like to see more housing choices in Mentor so their workers can find homes near their jobs.

Mentor is also at the cusp of a generational change. It has a large contingent of empty nesters and retirees, many of whom will choose

to look for a lower maintenance housing option in the next ten to fifteen years. At the other end of the generational spectrum there is a new wave of young adults and families that would be happy to choose Mentor as a place to live in the next phase of their lives.

In this dynamic generational moment for Mentor, its housing stock is not keeping pace. The growth and adaptation of its housing stock has been gradual compared to the demographic changes. Some of this is due to the fact that Mentor is almost completely built out. But there are other impediments to housing development, which can be addressed in various ways.

**Housing Study and Needs Analysis.** The Mentor Housing Study and Needs Analysis was initiated in response to this distinctive context. Its goal is to understand Mentor's housing conditions and market context, and the housing related needs of the Mentor community. It identifies strategies that can be employed to address Mentor's

present and future housing challenges and meet community needs.

The following pages document an analysis of:

- The economic and demographic factors that shape housing demand
- The market context for new housing development
- Mentor's existing housing inventory, and
- The "gap" between the housing needs of the community and the housing that is available to meet those needs

The analysis provides essential information for City staff and elected officials as they shape housing related policies and action strategies to meet community needs and advance the City's economic and human progress. It also offers critical intelligence to builders and developers that want to understand the character of Mentor's housing market and the sources of housing demand.

## Study Overview

The study concludes with strategic action. It offers a menu of housing strategies that are relevant to and viable in Mentor's market context—taking into consideration what was learned about its unique challenges and opportunities, and the needs of the Mentor community. The strategies are a kit of ideas that can inform the City's housing-related action plan in the years to come.

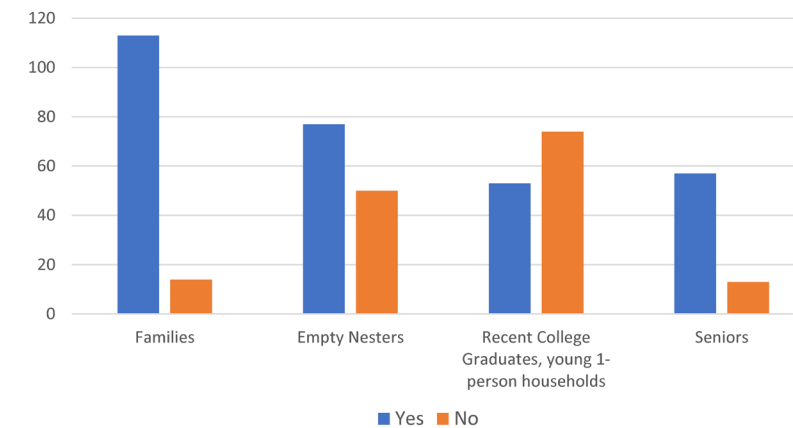
**Community engagement.** The insights of stakeholders and community members have sharpened this analysis and informed its strategic guidance. Input was gathered in the following ways.

- A housing survey generated 931 responses from people who provided information on their personal housing situation and preferences.
- Focus groups and structured interviews were conducted over the course of the study with housing developers and community stakeholders.

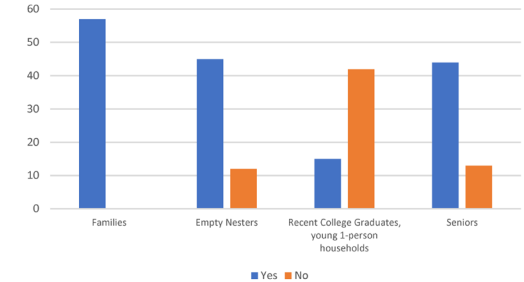


### Question 2. Does Mentor have enough of the right kinds of housing to serve the following community populations?

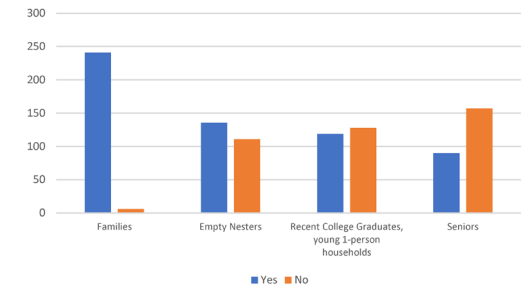
All Responses



Age 18 to 29



Age 65+



# INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Study Overview

**Development Drivers.** Mentor is job rich and job diverse. It is especially strong in the manufacturing sector. It is also a center of retail activity and employment. The fastest employment growth is in “new economy high wage” business sectors, which tend to provide jobs in professional occupations.

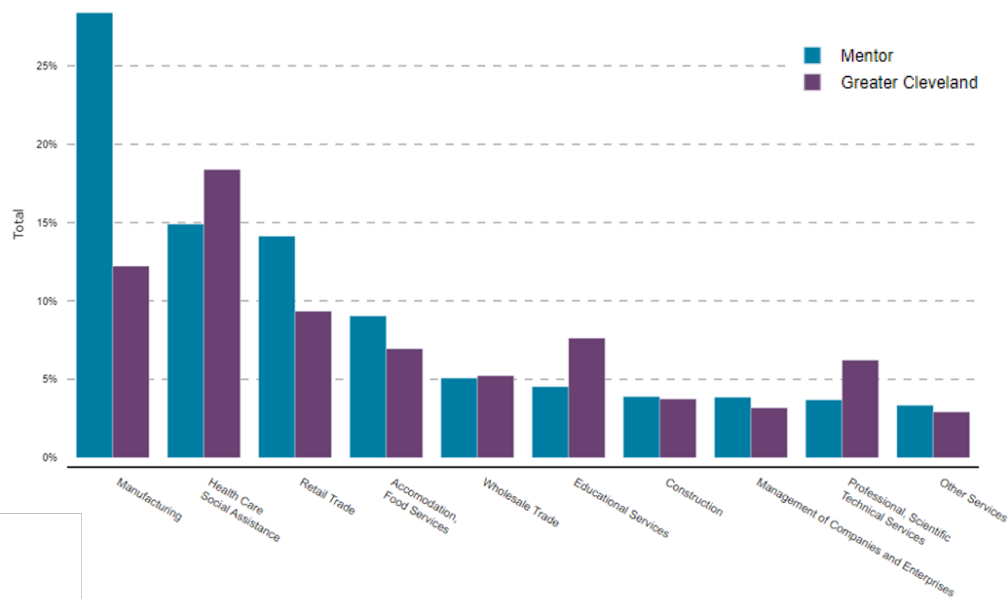
**Demographics.** The median age in Mentor is 47.

That compares to a median age of under 43 for the Cleveland metropolitan area as a whole. The community is solidly middle class, with average incomes somewhat higher than average for the region.

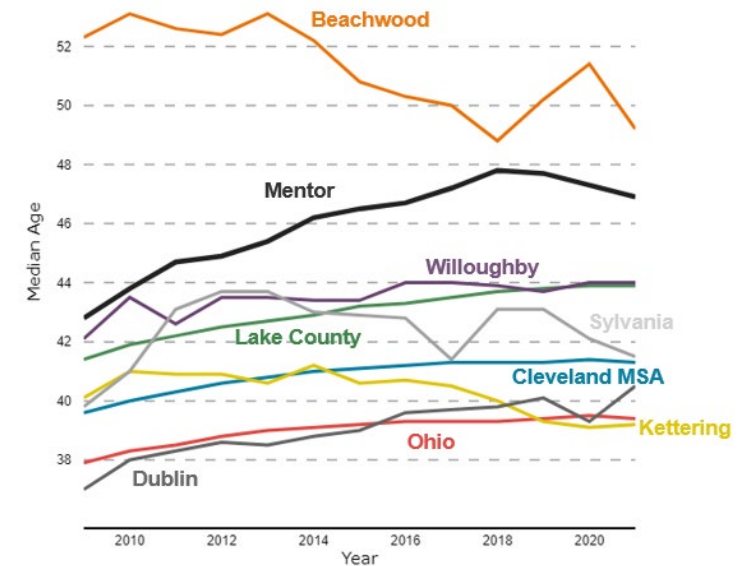
Mentor includes households across the income spectrum but most are earning greater than \$80,000. Mentor’s early-career households are

fewer than in many locations, largely due to the lack of housing types suitable to this demographic. Many Mentor jobs require this cohort, so facilitating more housing choices for them will help workers live closer to their place of employment.

### Mentor’s Job Base Relative to Cleveland Metro



### Median Age Trendline



# INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Study Overview

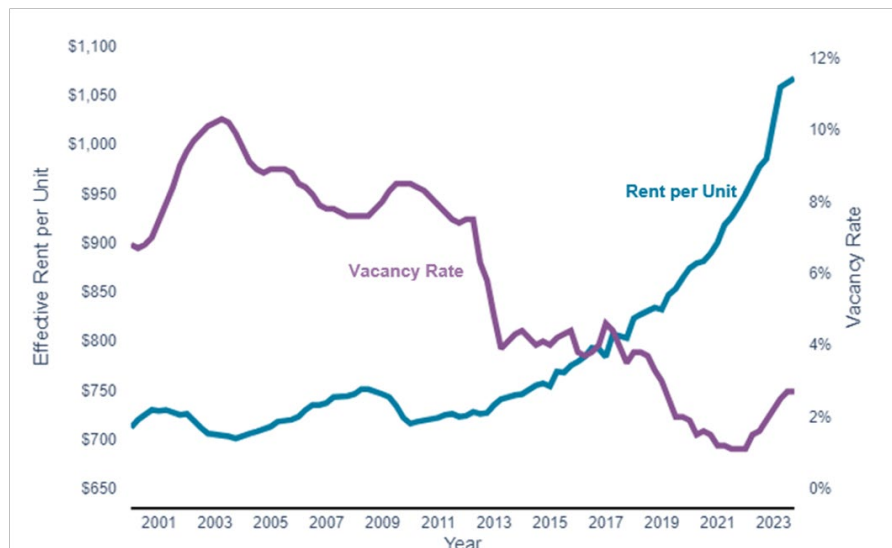
**Market indicators.** There is robust demand for single-family homes. Inventory is restricted due to high mortgage rates, and homes that do enter the market are purchased quickly. Out of around 21,000 housing units, only around 17% or 1,260 are rental apartments. That results in strong demand for those units. Average rents have steeply increased in recent years, with vacancy

rates that have remained low at around 2%.

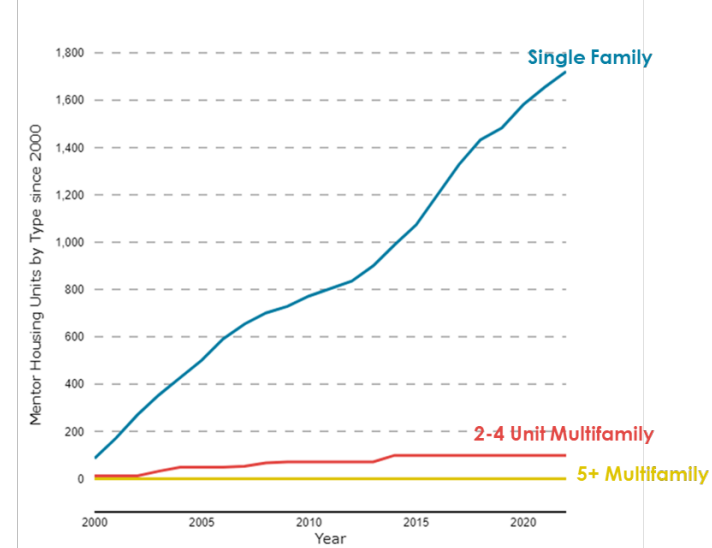
**Inventory.** Mentor's almost 17,000 single family homes make that the dominant form of housing in Mentor. Mentor also offers almost 3,000 condominiums and townhomes. And there are around 1,260 apartments. Apartment and condominium buildings tend to be older. They

lack the amenities, design, and orientation to community-based amenities often desired by renters. Mentor also lacks the town center that can sometimes serve as a magnet for new upscale apartments or condominiums.

Multi-Family Rent Growth relative to Vacancy Rates



Mentor Housing Units Built by Type Since 2000





## Study Overview

**Gap analysis.** The gap analysis illuminated deficits and mismatches that have been created in Mentor over time. Houses are larger than needed for many Mentor households, sometimes due to kids growing up and moving out. There is a significant deficit in housing affordable to workforce households. Single person households, and households working in service sector jobs, may struggle to find something they can afford. Senior housing options are not sufficient to accommodate the generational shift that is on its way. The newer upscale rental communities that attract young professional and older urban demographics are absent in Mentor.

**Housing needs.** In a scenario where Mentor establishes a supportive context for housing growth, we estimate it could capture 20% of the household/housing unit growth in Lake County. That equates to 1,229 new households. If the restoration of market equilibrium vacancy rates, and typical home demolition rates, are factored in, an estimated 1,732 housing units would be needed in the next ten years. The table at the right shows a recommended mix of housing types to meet Mentor’s projected housing needs over that period.

<b>Total New Housing Units in Mentor:</b>		
	<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Units</b>
<b>For Ownership</b>	60%	1,039
<b>For Rental</b>	40%	693
<b>Rental Market</b>		
<b>Senior Rentals</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>277</b>
<i>Senior Market Rate</i>	60%	166
<i>Senior Affordable</i>	40%	111
<b>General Market</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>416</b>
<i>Market Rate (Multi-Family)</i>	80%	333
<i>Workforce (Multi-Family)</i>	20%	83
<b>Ownership Market</b>		
<b>Senior Ownership</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>416</b>
<i>Condominium</i>	60%	249
<i>Townhome/Single Family</i>	40%	166
<b>General Market</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>624</b>
<i>Condominium</i>	20%	125
<i>Townhome</i>	20%	125
<i>Single-Family Detached</i>	60%	374

*\*\* Difference in total due to rounding*

## Study Overview

**Housing needs (continued).** It can also be helpful to think in terms of providing housing for three submarket populations that are important to Mentor's present and future.

- **Mentor's existing residents.** The household needs of Mentor's existing residents evolve over time. As they change, some will look for move-up housing, and older residents may want lower maintenance options in a range of density and ownership formats.
- **Area workforce.** Housing availability plays a role in businesses being able to attract the workers they need. Some workers will be looking for entry level homes or reasonably priced rental housing. Others will be drawn to upscale rental communities if available.
- **Younger Mentor residents, today and tomorrow.** The coming generational turnover can reenergize community life in a variety of ways. Younger individuals and households

will appreciate Mentor's existing single-family homes as well as new starter home options, and, if available, new apartment communities in distinctive locations.

**Stakeholder input.** Input from community members, City officials and stakeholders reinforced many of these housing needs, and articulated a set of housing related challenges and opportunities, as noted below.



### CHALLENGES

- Regulation
- Land availability
- Cost of infrastructure
- Growth in development costs
- Lack of recent development makes it hard to set rent expectations
- Lack of a hub or activated mixed use district



### NEEDS

- Short term housing options
- Single family rental housing
- Senior/ Empty nester housing- both multifamily and lower density
- Upscale apartments and condominiums
- Attainable housing options
- Housing targeted to young adults
- Housing integrated with an activated commercial and entertainment district



### OPPORTUNITIES

- Mall redevelopment
- Bolton property
- Other infill opportunities
- Regulatory improvements
- Upgrading existing multifamily properties
- Preserving the affordability of existing multifamily properties

## Study Overview

**Housing strategies.** The study offers a range of housing strategies that are suitable for Mentor’s specific development context and would address identified community needs. They are organized in this report under three headings—Production Strategies, Preservation Strategies, and Site-Specific Strategies. Each strategy is proposed for consideration with a summary of its objective, the existing development context, and a description of what the strategy would entail. A case study or best practice example is included where available. The recommended strategies are listed at right.

**Strategic Priority.** All of the strategies have merit, and the task of prioritizing them for action will be the responsibility of the City of Mentor in the months and years ahead. Having said that, the first strategy in the list—City Code Revisions—is a recommended priority because it would have the greatest impact in terms of removing barriers that the private sector faces in advancing housing development in Mentor. The

referendum requirement in particular was noted again and again as an impediment to building in Mentor. That City Charter provision puts the general public in a project review role that is typically served by elected or appointed officials. It chills development activity because it extends the development timeline, and it introduces a major element of uncertainty for a prospective developer who must invest significant resources in the planning and design of a project, knowing that it may be voted down in the future by a subset of the public that is motivated to vote on the project.

**Appreciation.** We are grateful for our interaction with Mentor’s staff and elected officials, and appreciate the dedication they have demonstrated to the needs of the Mentor community. We’re hopeful that these analytical observations and potential actions provide insights and guidance to Mentor elected officials, staff and community members in the future.

**PRODUCTION STRATEGIES**

- City code revisions (including eliminating the referendum)
- Apartments and condominiums
- Workforce units in market rate apartments
- Rent-restricted workforce housing
- Senior housing
- Accessory Dwelling Units

**PRESERVATION STRATEGIES**

- Preserve the condition and affordability of existing multifamily properties
- Community Land Trusts
- Rehab Support for homes

**SITE-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES**

- Great Lakes mall
- Infill development and redevelopment

# INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Term and Acronym Overview

### *Housing Terms*

**LIHTC** – The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (pronounced Li-tec) is a federal program in the United States that awards tax credits to housing developers in exchange for agreeing to reserve a certain fraction of rent-restricted units for lower-income households. Often set at 60% of a region's Area Median Income, LIHTC units can be an important source of newly built, high quality rental housing. LIHTC can be used for single-family homes, multi-family units, and senior households.

**AMI** – Area Median Income (AMI) is used by the US Department of Housing and Development to determine eligibility for affordable and public subsidized housing. A bit of a misnomer, the Area Median Income is determined by taking the region's median family income, a number which is higher than household or personal incomes.

**HUD** – HUD stands for the US Department of Housing and Development, the federal agency that provides housing for affordable and subsidized housing projects.

**NOAH** – Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing refers to non-subsidized rental housing in a community that is affordable to those earning workforce incomes, usually defined as being between 60-120% of AMI. NOAH units tend to be in older (pre-2000), non-subsidized multi-family units.

**Workforce Housing** – Workforce is a policy term that refers to households earning anywhere from 60-120% AMI. Workforce households often earn too much to live in subsidized housing, but often find a major shortage of housing in the community. Workforce housing is crucial for long-term economic and community health, ensuring more wages can be spent on child care, education, and recreational consumption.

**Cost Burdened** – A cost-burdened household is spending more than 30% of pre-tax household income on housing related costs (ie: gross rent or mortgage plus taxes and insurance).

### *Data Sources*

**ACS** – The ACS refers to the American Community Survey. 1% of the US population is surveyed each year. The 5-year ACS survey used in this study aggregated the 5 years prior to create a 5% sample. The 5-year survey is a great source for understanding demographic trends between each decennial census.

**BEA** – The Bureau of Economic Analysis tracks data on the US economy. Data is often aggregated at the county and metropolitan level. The county level can be used to understand economic trends in a community.

**BLS** – The Bureau of Labor Statistics tracks labor force statistics, including employment, wages, firm-size, and union status.

**Warren Group** – An aggregator of parcel-level data that is used in conjunction with the Lake County Auditor's office.

**LEHD** – The Longitudinal Employment-Household Dynamics survey is operated by the Census Bureau and links where people live to where they work, broken down by industry. It is the main source for census tool OnTheMap.

**PUMS** – The Public Use Microdata Sample contains records about individual people and housing units from the ACS, in both 1-year and 5-year samples.

**MSA** – Metropolitan Statistical Area, one or more counties that have a combined 100,000 people and an urbanized area of 50,000+. Mentor is part of the Cleveland-Elyria MSA.

# Mentor: By the Numbers

## Demographics

**47,369** Total Population  
**19,681** Households  
**2.4** Persons per Household  
**46.9** Median Age  
**35%** Married W/out Children (empty nesters)  
**22%** 65 and over

Source: ACS 2021 5-year survey

## Economics

**\$84,503** Median Household Income  
**2.5%** Unemployment Rate

**Manufacturing is the growth engine, producing 2.5x the GDP of the next closest sector**

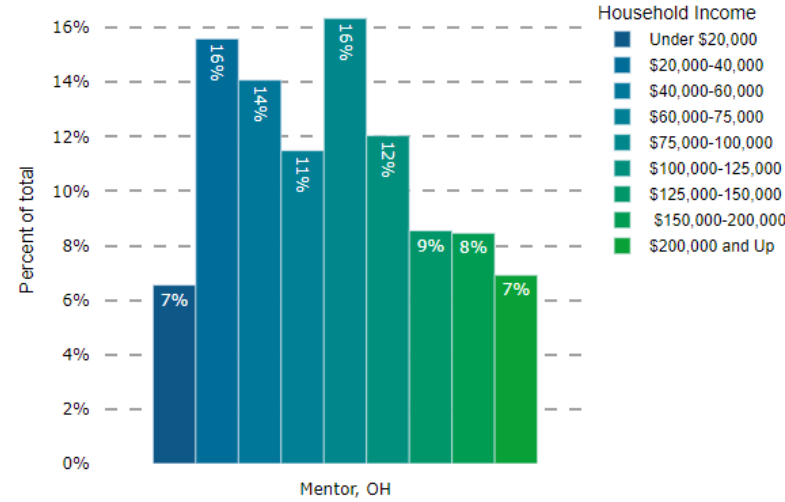
Source: ACS 2021 5-year survey, BEA, BLS

## Housing

**83.2%** Owner-Occupied Units  
**61%** Homeowners with Mortgage  
**83%** Single family (17,147 units), **15%** 3,046 multi-unit (3,046), **1.8%** mobile home (371)  
**\$252,000** median single-family home value, 4Q 2023  
**39%** of Renters Cost Burdened  
**173** workforce households for every **100** units of housing affordable for workforce incomes

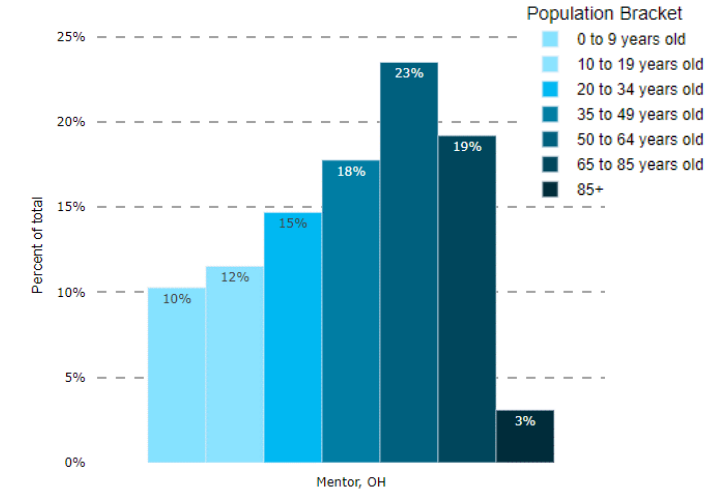
Source: ACS 2021 5-year survey, Stantec

## Households by Income: Mentor



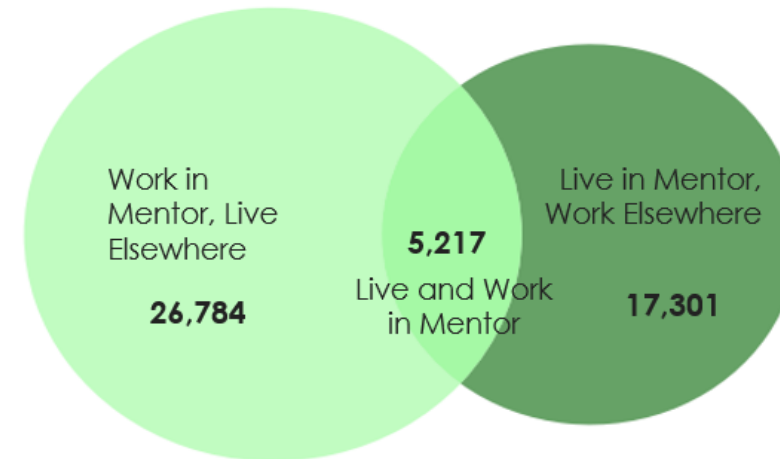
Source: ACS 2021 5-year survey

## Population by Age: Mentor



Source: ACS 2021 5-year survey

## Mentor: Inflow and Outflow



Source: LEHD



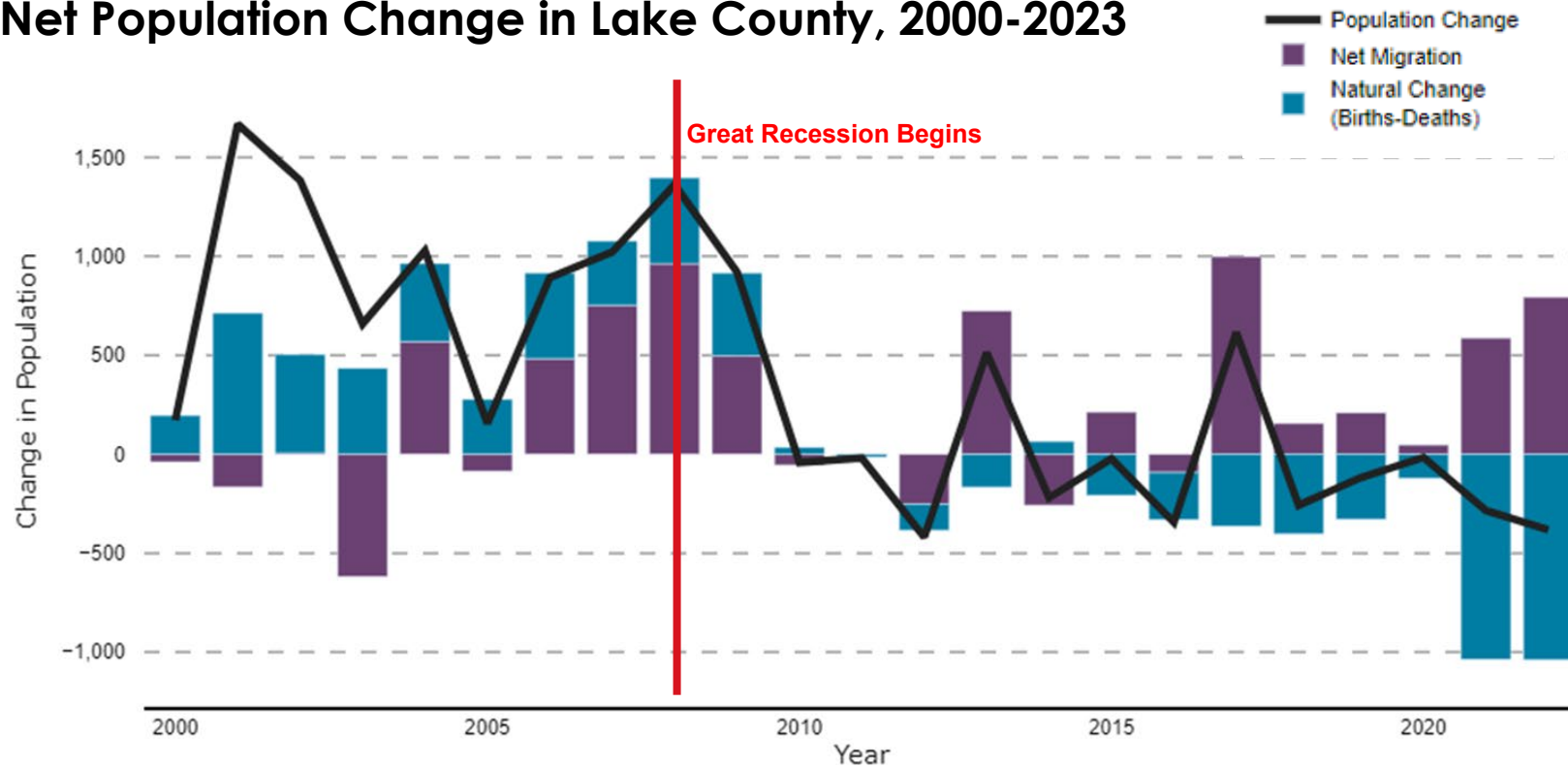
# 02

## DEVELOPMENT DRIVERS

## Lake County population has leveled out, with development offset by smaller household sizes

Growth remained robust in the 2000s before tapering during the Great Recession (The Great Recession was a large economic downturn lasting from December 2007 to June 2009, with a long recovery extending through 2014). As the population ages, natural change (deaths outpacing births) remains a major source of population loss, outweighing continued in-migration.

**Net Population Change in Lake County, 2000-2023**

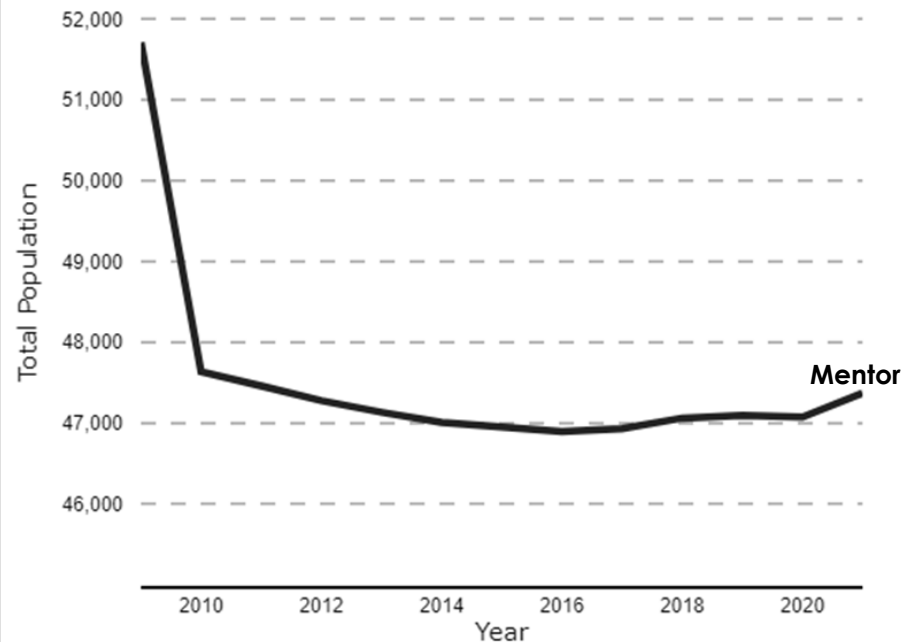


*Note on geography:* Data availability for survey's can be limited to certain geographies. In the circumstances where data is lacking for the city of Mentor, Lake County is substituted as a proximate geography. The regional context captures the main components and trends that shape housing demand in Mentor.

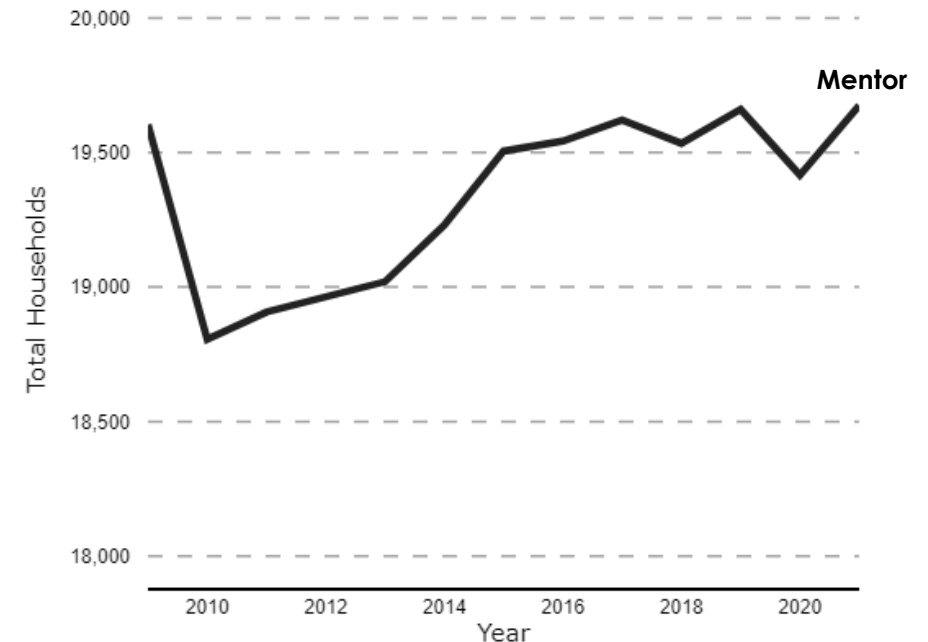
### Mentor's population dropped after the recession, but quickly stabilized

Mentor's population dropped by 4,410 persons from 2012-2022, while household numbers dropped and then recovered. Household growth is a result of the shrinking size of Mentor households as families with children are replaced with empty-nesters. Loss of younger people has been compensated for with in-migration of new, albeit smaller, households.

#### Population Trends



#### Total Household Trends

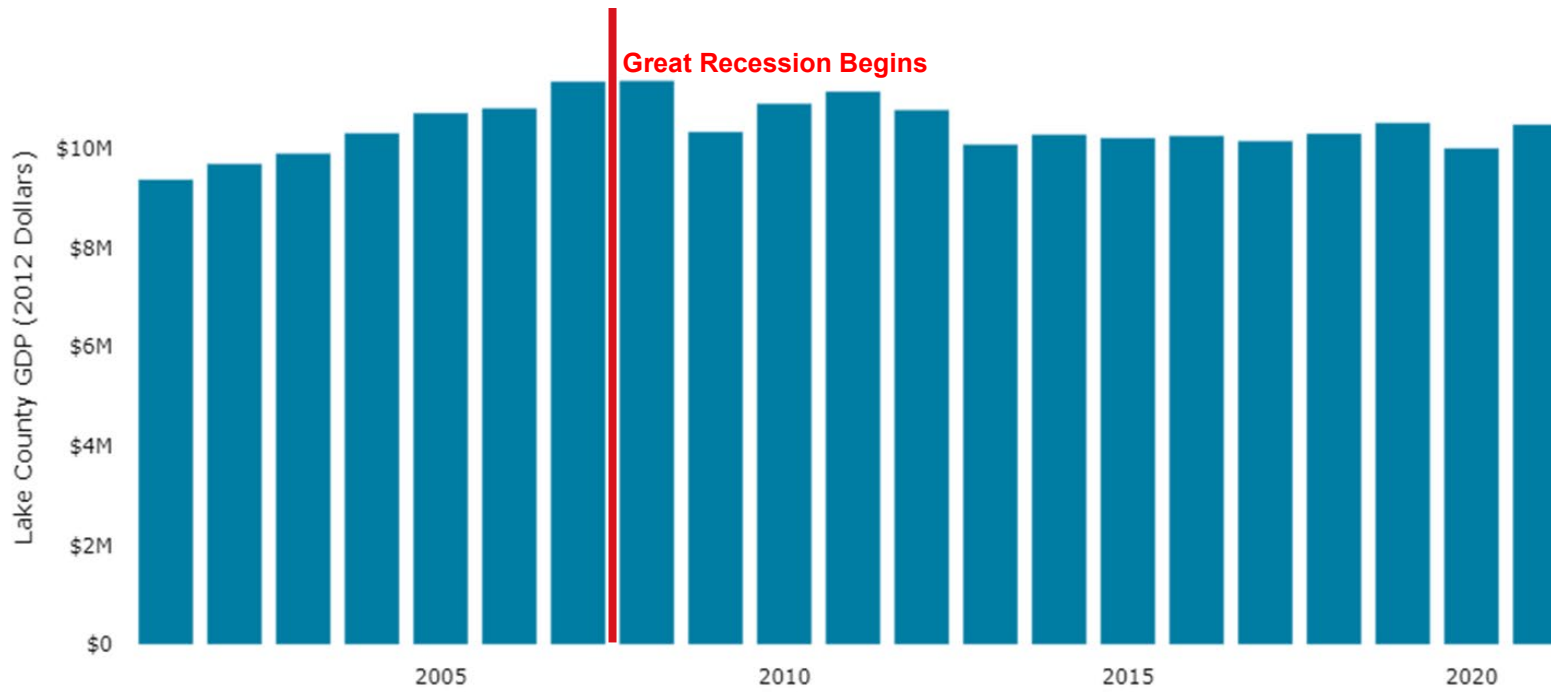




## Modest GDP growth occurred during the 2000s, only to fall and then stabilize after 2008

Total gross domestic product (economic output from Mentor businesses) has stabilized in Mentor. Stagnant economic growth drives less demand for new employment and, therefore, new household formation.

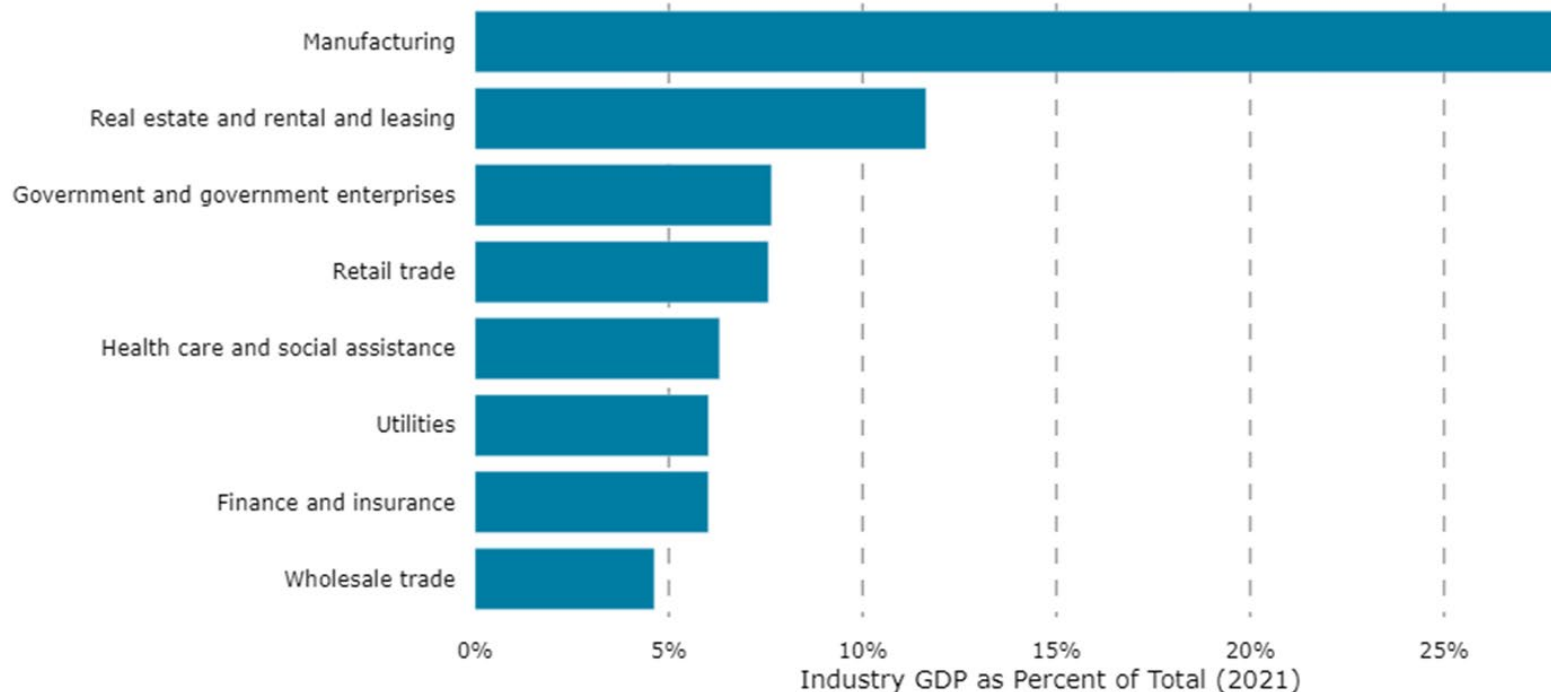
### Lake County GDP Growth



## Economic output in Lake County is driven by manufacturing

Manufacturing remains central to Lake County economic output and job creation. Despite the great wave of outsourcing during the 2000s and early 2010s, Lake County’s manufacturing sector remains a major strength, and may be positioned to grow in a political economic climate favoring reshoring and domestic production.

### GDP by Industry in Lake County



GDP is generally driven by tradeable goods. Tradeable goods often include durable manufactured goods and ‘knowledge’ based services such as corporate management, financial activities, or professional services.

Lake County’s GDP is driven by manufacturing, with manufacturing contributing to nearly 28% of total GDP. The buying/selling of real estate – typical for a residential suburb – is also a major driver of economic output.

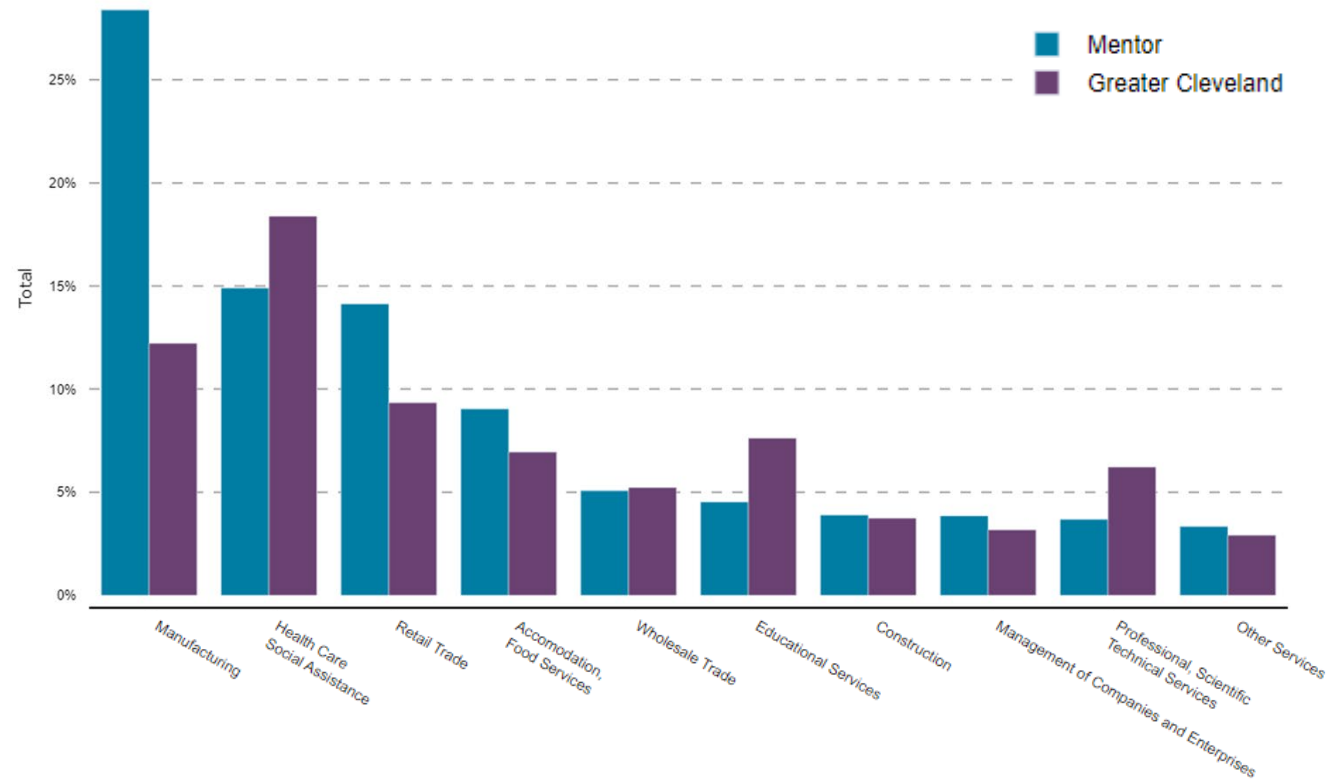
## Manufacturing is a major employer at a much higher rate than the metro

The centrality of manufacturing to Mentor’s economy is reflected in the total employment in the sector. 29% of jobs in Mentor are in the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing jobs support other services, including jobs in retail, accommodation, and food services that are also over-represented relative to the Cleveland Metro.

Mentor’s job base is rooted in the manufacturing sector. However, due to high productivity, jobs in the manufacturing sector are less abundant relative to output compared to services.

As a center for regional trade and healthcare for Lake County, Mentor also contains a higher proportion of jobs in the service sectors than the broader metro.

### Mentor’s Job Base Relative to Cleveland Metro



## Situating the New Economy

The New Economy refers to transitions in the North American industrial structure post-globalization and the central drivers of regional economic development.

**New Economy High Wage** sectors are knowledge-based jobs that remain concentrated in urban centers and are historically less prone to geographical relocation. These industries remain the main catalyst for agglomeration – or spatial concentration – of industries. Knowledge production is a tradeable good that often drives urban development. Wages in these sectors drive effective demand for other service-based industries, medical services, and education.

**Blue Collar** sectors contain industries historically central to a manufacturing-based economy and contain tradeable goods that benefit from economies of scale. Manufacturing – in particular – is less “geographically sticky” (can be moved more easily) in an era of globalization. These jobs often have lower educational requirements, but due to higher productivity, skill demands, and union density, wages remain higher than service sector work. They, likewise, are major drivers of regional economic development.

**New Economy Low Wage** sectors grow in proportion to other regional economic drivers. They are non-tradeable sectors and are ‘geographically sticky.’ Due to lower labor productivity, growth in demand is met with increased labor. Wages remain low, although exceptions exist (such as Wholesale Trade). These are generally non-tradeable goods, but often a sizeable sector in a regional economy.

**Eds, Meds and Gov** contain industries with higher proportions of middle-income wage earners due to educational requirements. These jobs concentrate both in regional hubs driven by New Economy High Wage jobs and in historic regional centers. They are non-tradeable goods and place-bound, but in the case of higher education institutions or sizeable public sector installations (Lakeland Community College and Cleveland Clinic Hospital), they can drive regional economic development.

Analytical Category	NAICS Sectors
New Economy: High Wage	Finance and Insurance Real Estate and Rental and Leasing Information Management of Corporations Professional and Business Services
New Economy: Low Wage	Transportation and Warehouse Wholesale Trade Retail Trade Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Accommodation and Food Services Other Services
Blue Collar	Construction Manufacturing Utilities Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
Eds, Meds and Gov	Educational Services Health Care and Social Assistance Public Administration

# The New Economy in Mentor and the Cleveland-Elyria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

Mentor is part of a regional economy - its population growth is contingent on the economic development of the region. Jobs drive population growth. Of Mentor's estimated 26,784 jobs, only 19.5% of those who work in Mentor live in Mentor. Of Mentor's 22,518 employed residents, 69.8% commute elsewhere for work. In other words, the town is regionally integrated.

Mentor's place in the MSA is similar to numerous suburbs nationwide. Since the early 1970s, manufacturing jobs once located in the urban core relocated to the suburban periphery where a combination of rail and truck-based transport made relocation to cheaper land feasible. Situated along a rail line, Mentor attracted manufacturing jobs and developed an industrial park that remains one of the larger and more resilient industrial centers in the region. While globalization and China's entry into the WTO dampened domestic manufacturing, Mentor's manufacturing base has remained strong, remaining the primary economic driver of suburban Lake County and a provider of strong middle-class incomes. **Blue Collar** work in manufacturing is complemented by construction and skilled building trades, two fields that are often highly contingent on broader development demand. In a lower growth environment, construction remains a minor but important component of Mentor's economic base due to its strong middle-class wage structure.

Alongside its emergence as a manufacturing hub, Mentor

emerged as a bedroom community. As suburban growth boomed in the 1970s, Mentor built out a large proportion of its single-family homes. Many who currently live in Mentor commute elsewhere for work, in particular to **New Economy High Wage** "knowledge" based jobs that are located predominantly in downtown Cleveland and other peripheral, suburban office parks.

Income earned in export-oriented tradable good sectors has driven consumption, creating a large service-sector economy based in retail and food services. The majority of occupations in **New Economy Low Wage** sectors have lower labor productivity, requiring more labor per person to generate output. As a result, most occupations have lower wages but also exist in higher proportions than higher productivity industries. E-commerce is having a disruptive impact, however, on Mentor's service sector. The Great Lake Mall, once a regional destination, faces major economic headwinds from e-commerce consumption that shifted jobs away from brick-and-mortar retail to warehouses located elsewhere in the metro region. Nonetheless, the large proportion of people working in New Economy Low Wage jobs in Mentor generates demand for affordable workforce housing. Mentor's housing stock is often too expensive for those working full-time in lower wage jobs, leading many to live outside Mentor in broader Lake County and commute in.

As a residential hub, Mentor also generates jobs in **Eds,**

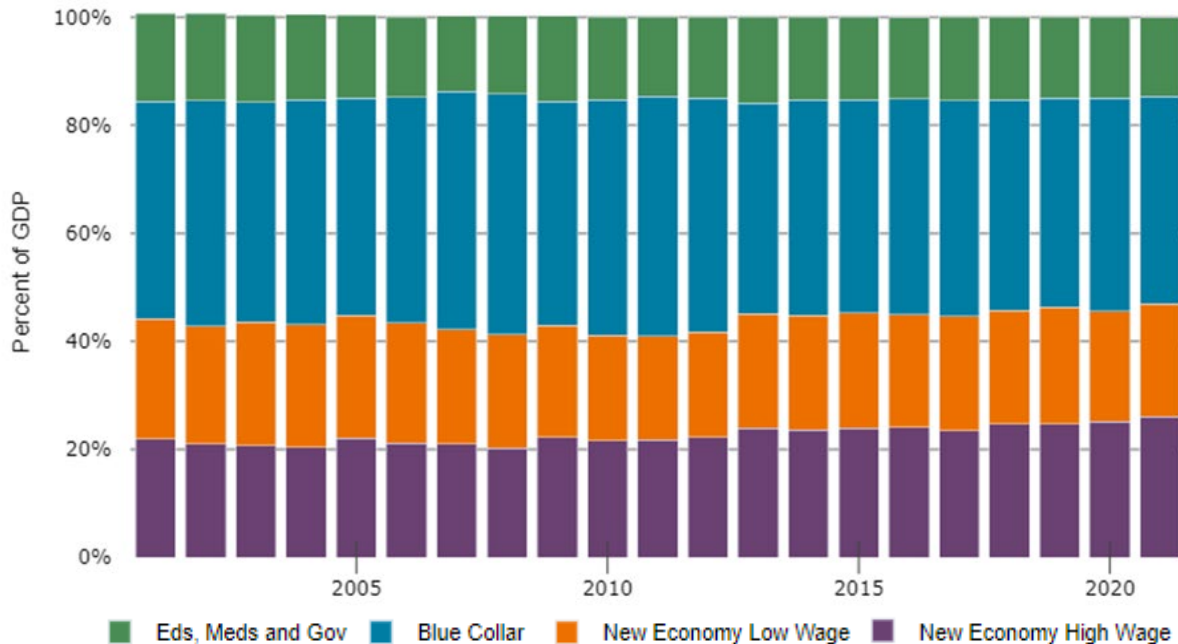
**Meds and Gov** jobs. Often requiring a college degree, these jobs have a higher proportion of middle-income professionals. In the Cleveland-Elyria MSA, eds, meds and gov jobs are heavily concentrated downtown where regional governance, regional hospitals, and large educational institutions (and educational administration) are located. However, these jobs also exist in proportion to population. In Mentor, demand for medical services from Mentor's aging population is creating significant job growth, whereas jobs in education and government have held relatively constant. As a suburb dominated by single-family homes, Mentor as a community draws in a large proportion of people who work in middle-income occupations elsewhere in the broader metro, in particular in medical services and education.

Looking forward, Blue Collar manufacturing jobs will remain the primary driver of economic growth. Tailwinds for domestic manufacturing - including rising costs of globalization and a revived focus on industrial policy - buttress the existing industries in the region. However, demand will persist for housing affordable to those earning workforce incomes in lower wage service jobs and entry level occupations, and for those who are exiting the workforce into retirement and fixed incomes.

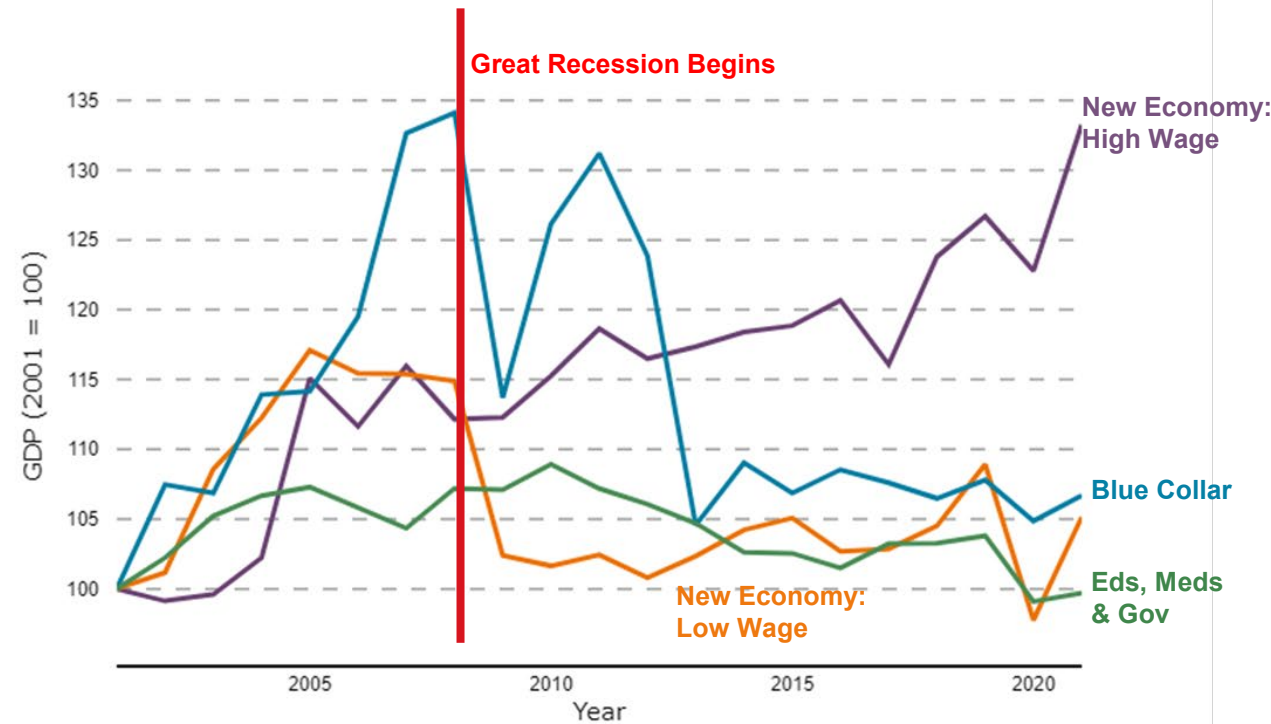
## Manufacturing is the largest economic sector, but the highest growth is in services

New Economy High Wage sectors include sub-sectors with tradable knowledge goods. They generate highly paid jobs. This sector of the economy has grown by 34% since 2000. Manufacturing output has only grown by 6% over the same period due to contraction after the Great Recession.

Proportion of GDP by Industry Grouping: Lake County



Indexed Change in GDP by Industry Grouping

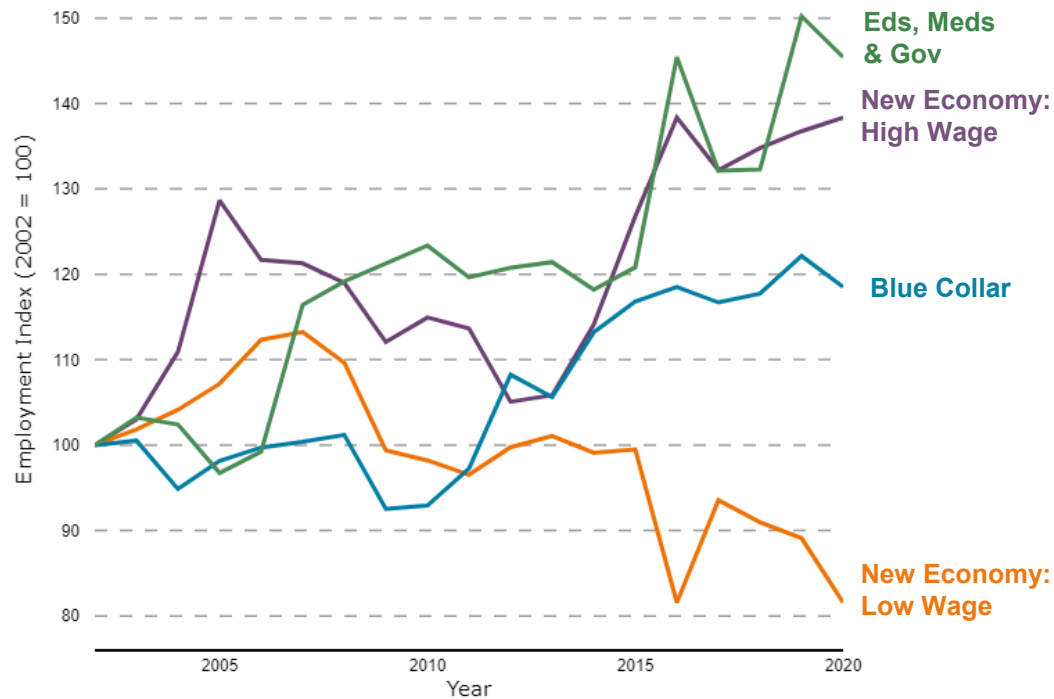


Source(s): BEA, 2000-2021

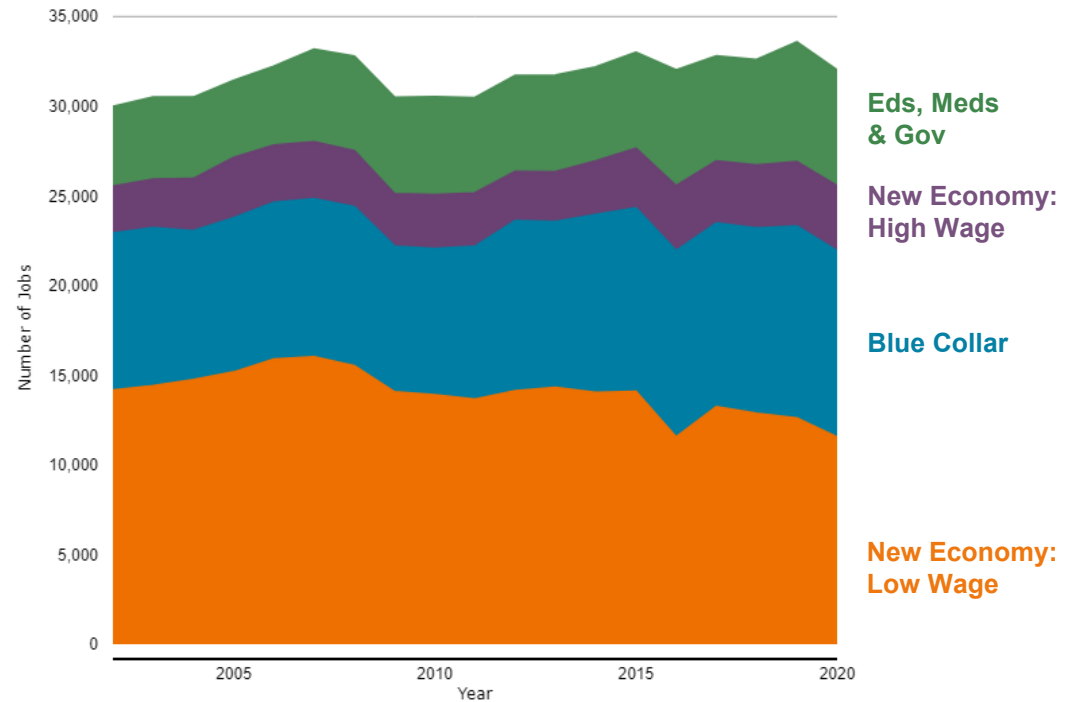
## Mentor's industrial composition is reflective of a regional commercial center

The majority of Mentor's employment is in Blue Collar and New Economy Low Wage industries. But employment is growing most quickly in Eds, Meds & Gov and New Economy High Wage industries. New Economy Low Wage jobs have been shrinking.

**Indexed Growth by Industrial Category**



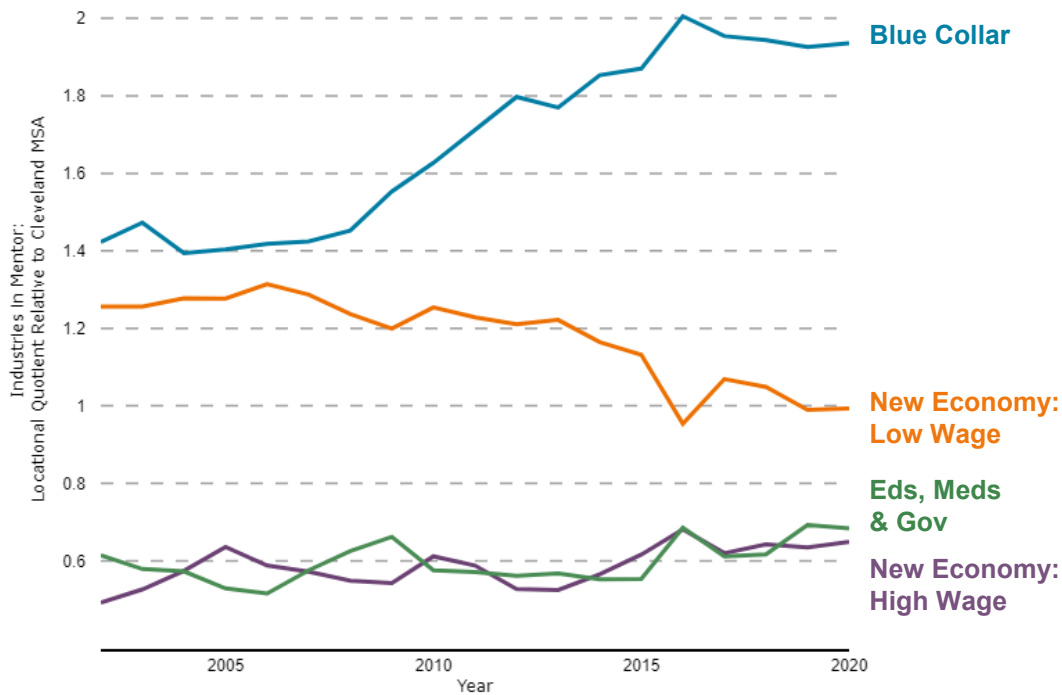
**Job Share by Industrial Category**



## Mentor is a growing hub for manufacturing

Manufacturing growth is occurring at a faster rate in Mentor than in the regional Cleveland economy. Lower Wage service sector jobs – in particular jobs lost in local retail to e-commerce – have been concentrating closer to newer distribution and logistics centers. High wage services are growing at a faster rate in Mentor than they are in broader Cleveland.

### Locational Quotient by Industrial Category



**A Note on Locational Quotients:** Locational quotients are a measure of spatial concentration. It is calculated by taking the ratio of jobs in a sector in a sub-area divided by total jobs in the local area (the local ratio), with the local ratio then divided by the same ratio derived for a broader geography. In this case, we are comparing the ratio of jobs in Mentor to the Cleveland Metro.

Numbers greater than 1 signify higher concentration, whereas numbers less than 1 signify lower concentrations.

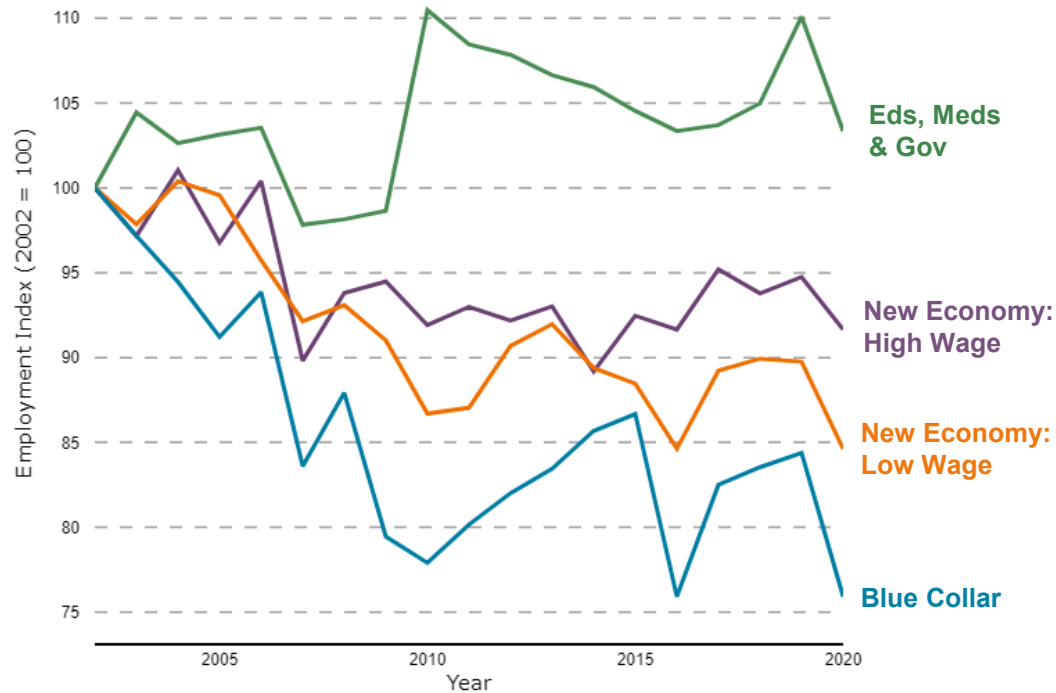
When viewed longitudinally (across time), one can observe if the concentration of those jobs in a place are increasing or decreasing relative to the broader geography, signaling if a set of industries are growing as a spatial cluster, or, if those clusters are being developed elsewhere in the broader region.



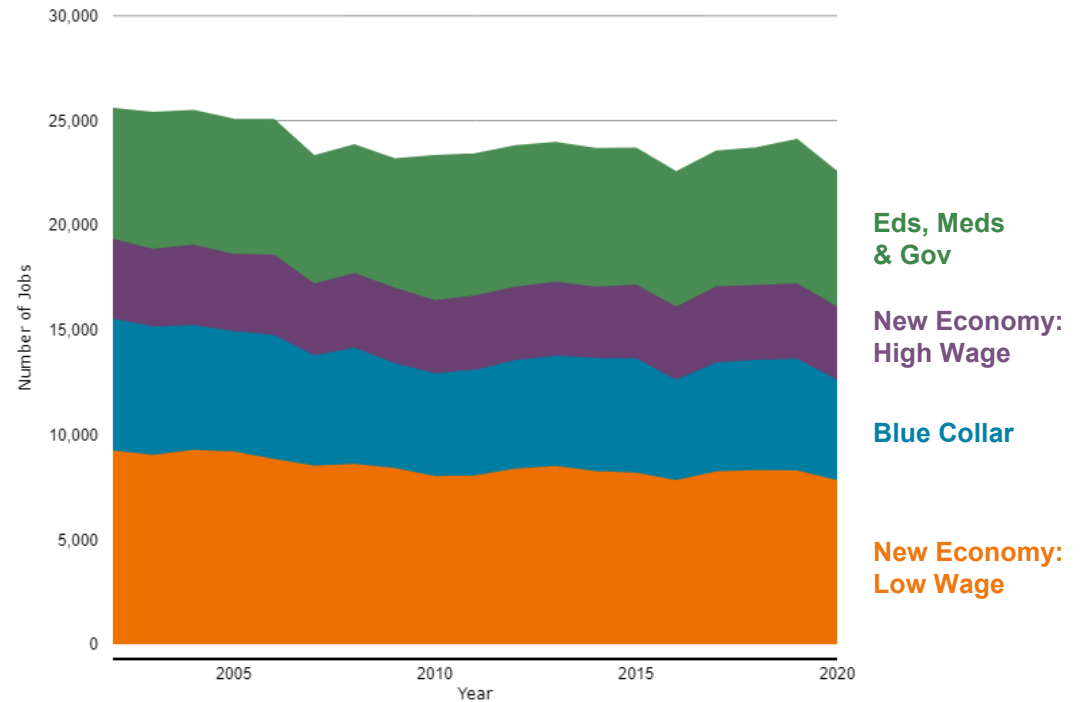
## Mentor residents are slowly exiting the workforce, driven by Blue Collar retirement

Mentor’s base of employed residents is shrinking, even though there is positive job growth. Declining employment numbers are a function of an aging community as more residents shift out of the labor force into retirement. The strongest decline is in manufacturing, whereas there has been growth of those who work in Eds, Meds and Gov.

**Indexed Growth by Industrial Category: Mentor Residents**



**Job Share by Industrial Category: Mentor Residents**

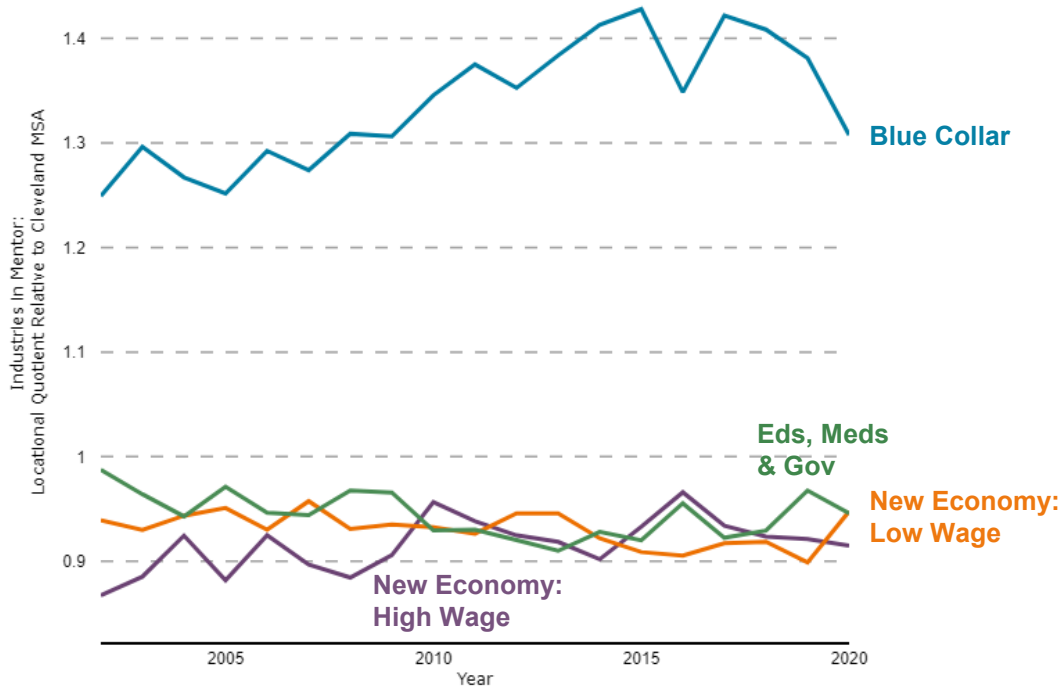


Source(s): OnTheMap 2002-2020

## Mentor residents remain rooted in the manufacturing sector

Residents remain rooted in the manufacturing sector. However, more Mentor residents work in middle income professions such as Eds, Meds and Gov than there are Mentor jobs in that sector. Conversely, there is a lower proportion of Mentor residents who work in lower-wage service sector jobs. People who work in those sectors tend to commute into Mentor.

### Location Quotients: Mentor Residents



**A Note on Locational Quotients:** Locational quotients are a measure of spatial concentration. It is calculated by taking the ratio of jobs in a sector in a sub-area divided by total jobs in the local area (the local ratio), with the local ratio then divided by the same ratio derived for a broader geography. In this case, we are comparing the ratio of jobs in Mentor to the Cleveland Metro.

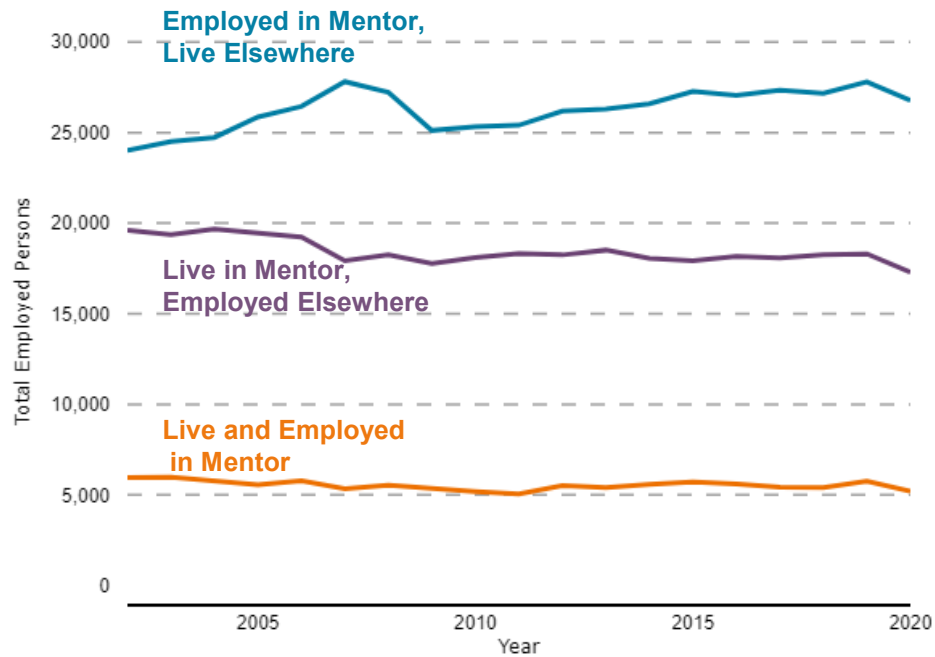
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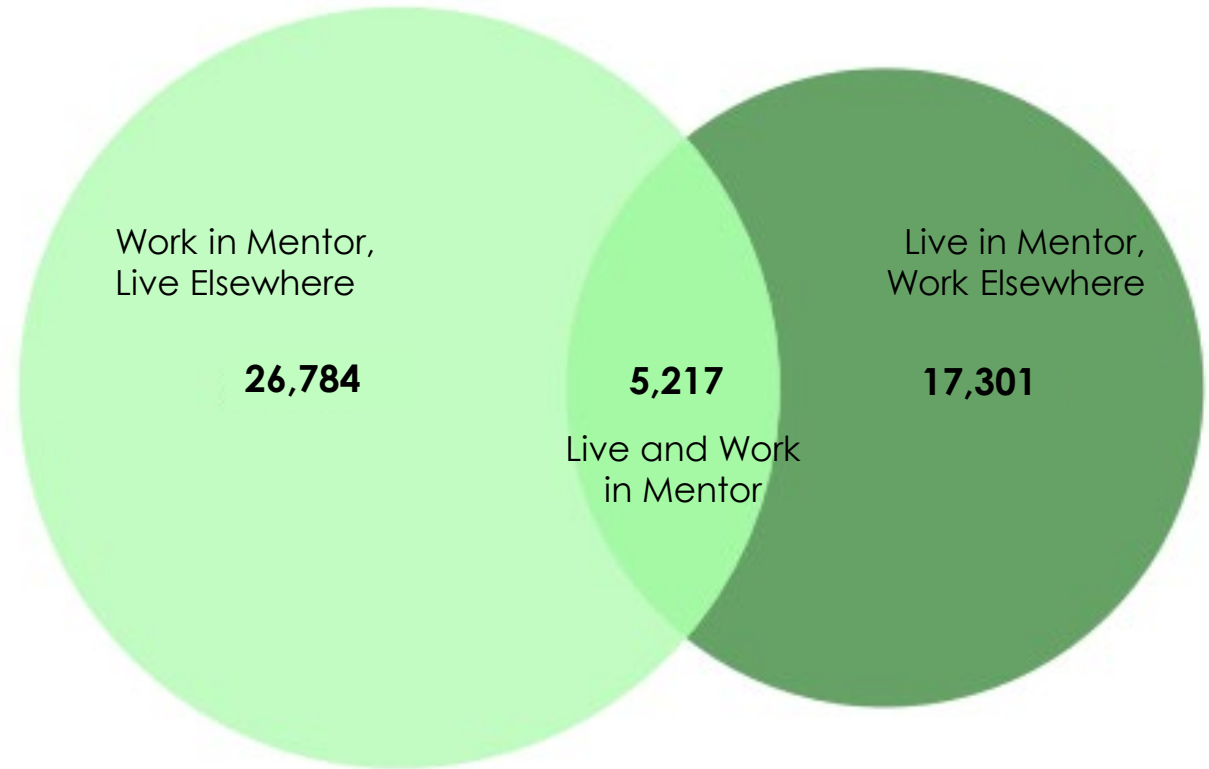
## Mentor is an employment magnet with a small overlap between those who live and work in Mentor

Typical of many metropolitan suburbs, few people live and work in Mentor. That fact has remained relatively constant over time. Triangulating from other trends, more workers are commuting in that work in the service sector, while more commute out who work in middle and high-income services.

**Inflow and Outflow in Mentor Over Time**



**Inflow/Outflow: Mentor**

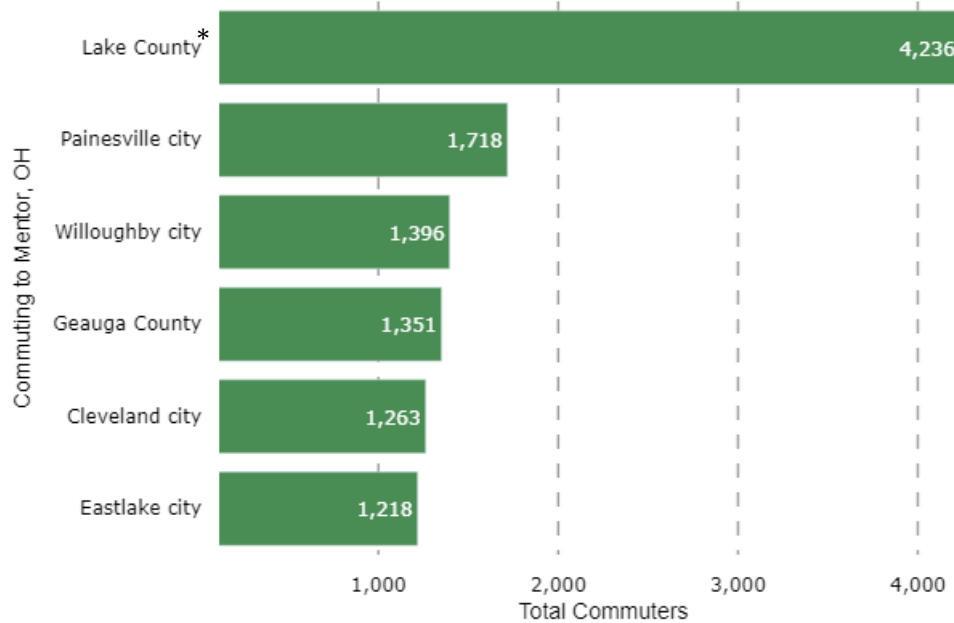


Source(s): OnTheMap 2002-2020

## The local labor market primarily attracts employees from within Lake County

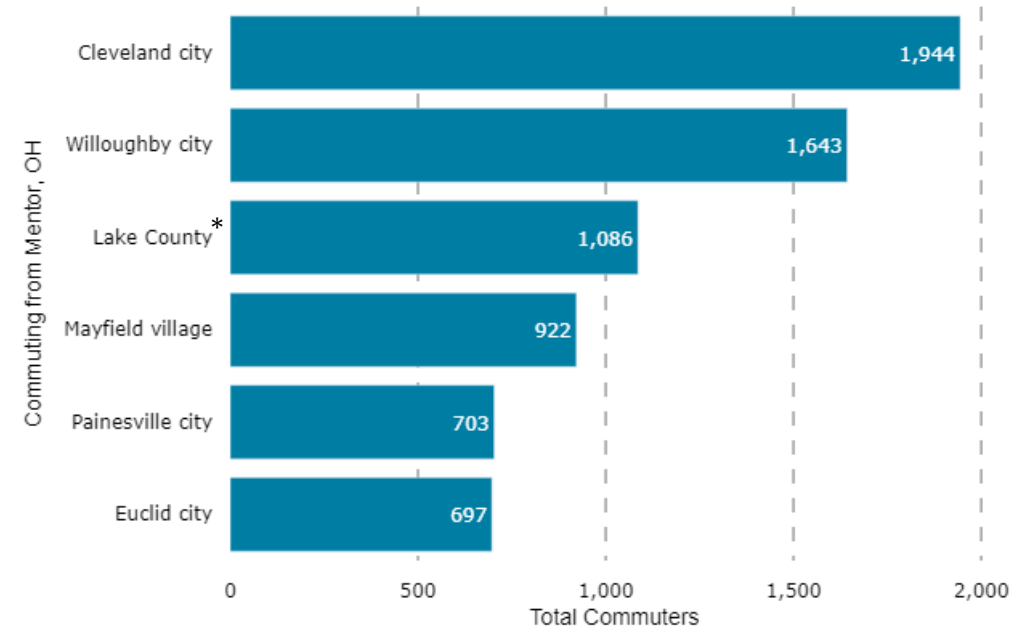
Commuters into Mentor are doing so from broader Lake County communities, whereas a much higher proportion commute into Cleveland. This supports the idea that people who live in Mentor tend to work in higher income industries than industries located in Mentor.

**Origin of Commuters into Mentor**



\*Unincorporated Lake County

**Destination of Mentor Commuters**

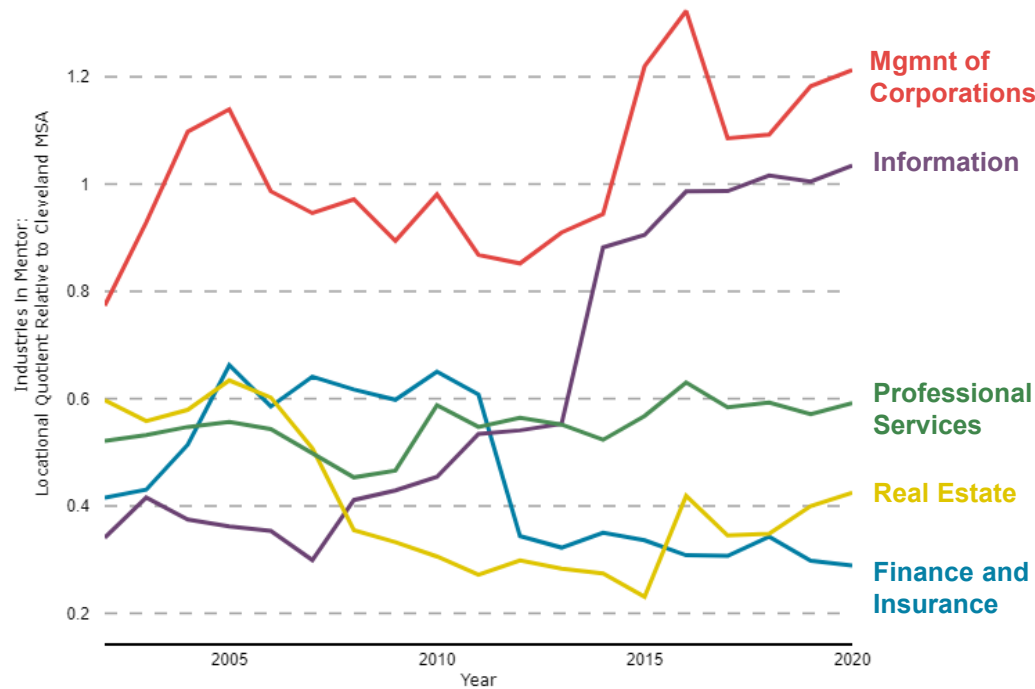


\*Unincorporated Lake County

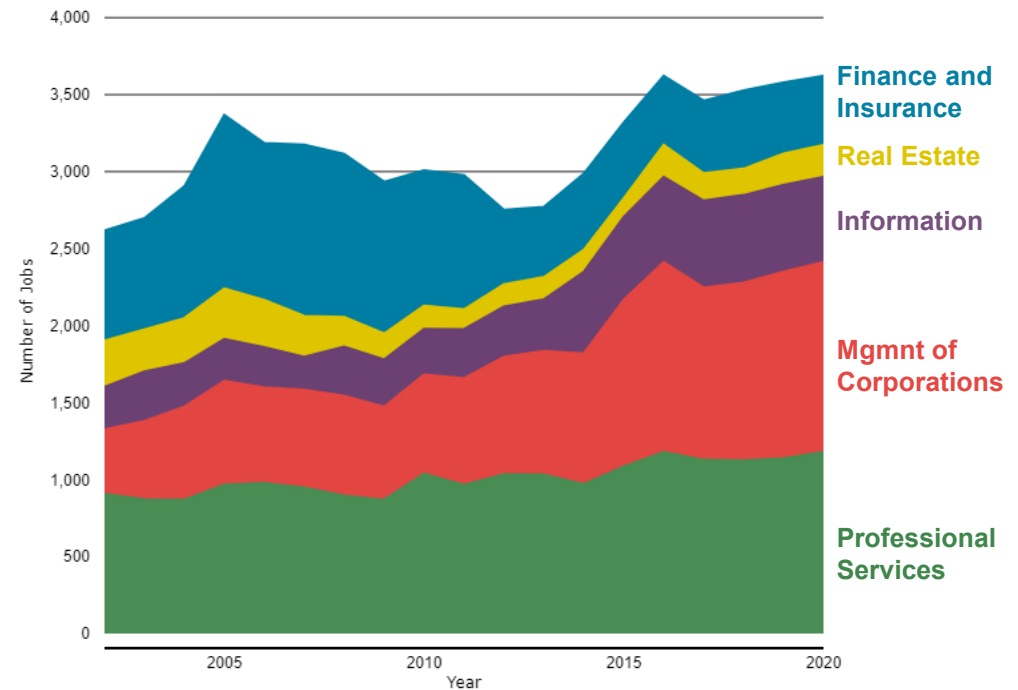
## High-Wage New Economy service industries are growing quickly

Management of corporations (194.27% growth), information (99.64% growth), and professional services (30.17%) have driven job growth, with Mentor adding nearly 1,000 new total jobs in this category, or 38.36% growth since 2002. This generates demand for higher value homes near corporate offices.

New Economy High Wage: Locational Quotients



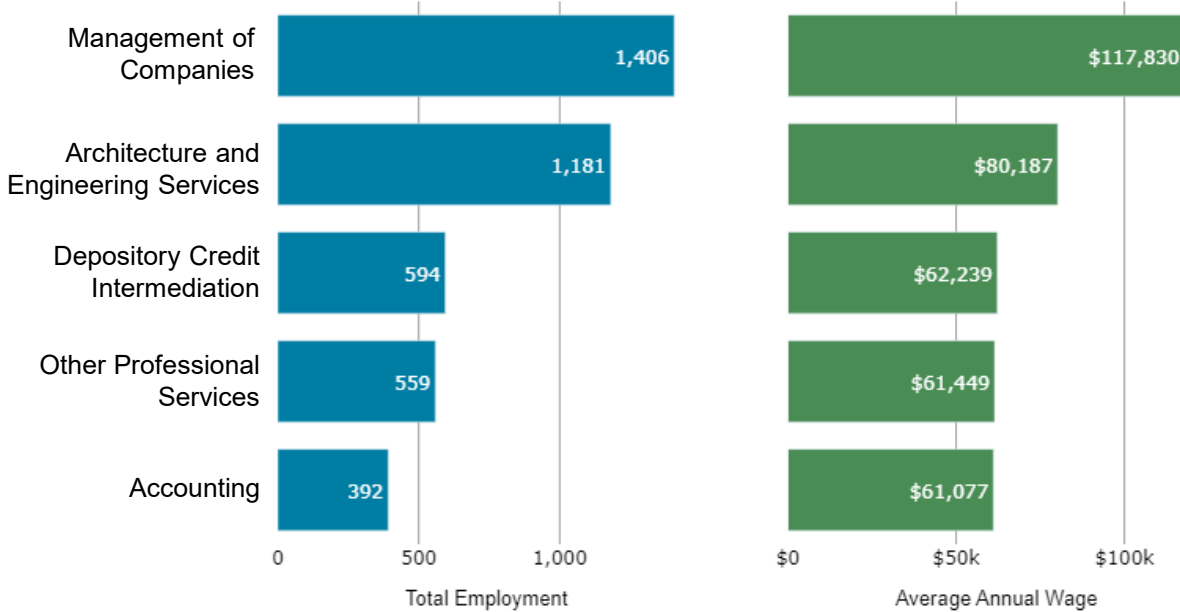
New Economy High Wage Industry Share



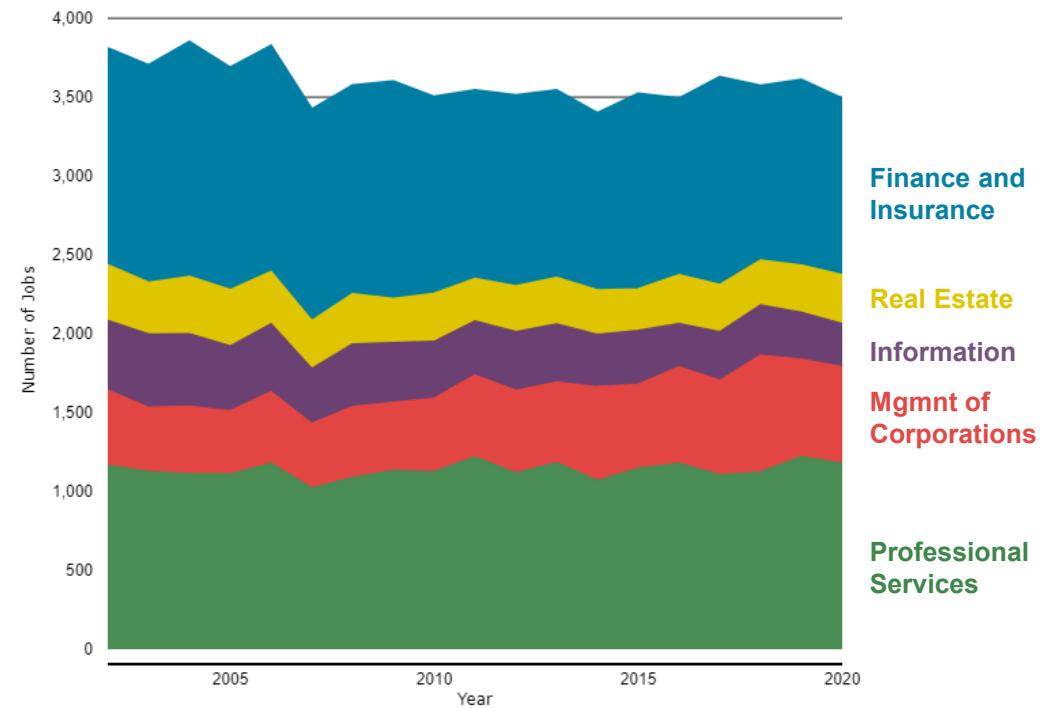
## Requiring a degree, wages are often higher

Despite growth in this sector, the number of people living within Mentor who work in the New Economy High Wage sector has remained consistent, albeit with some growth of corporate managers.

Breakdown of New Economy High Wage Jobs in Lake County



New Economy High Wage Industry Share: Mentor Residents

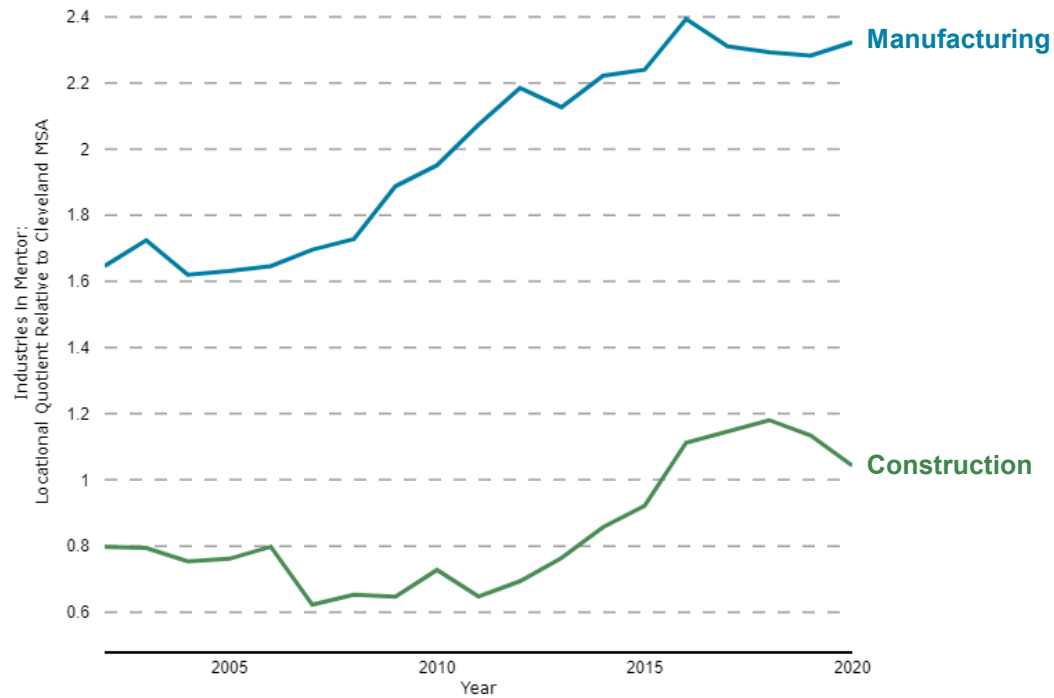


Source(s): OnTheMap 2002-2020

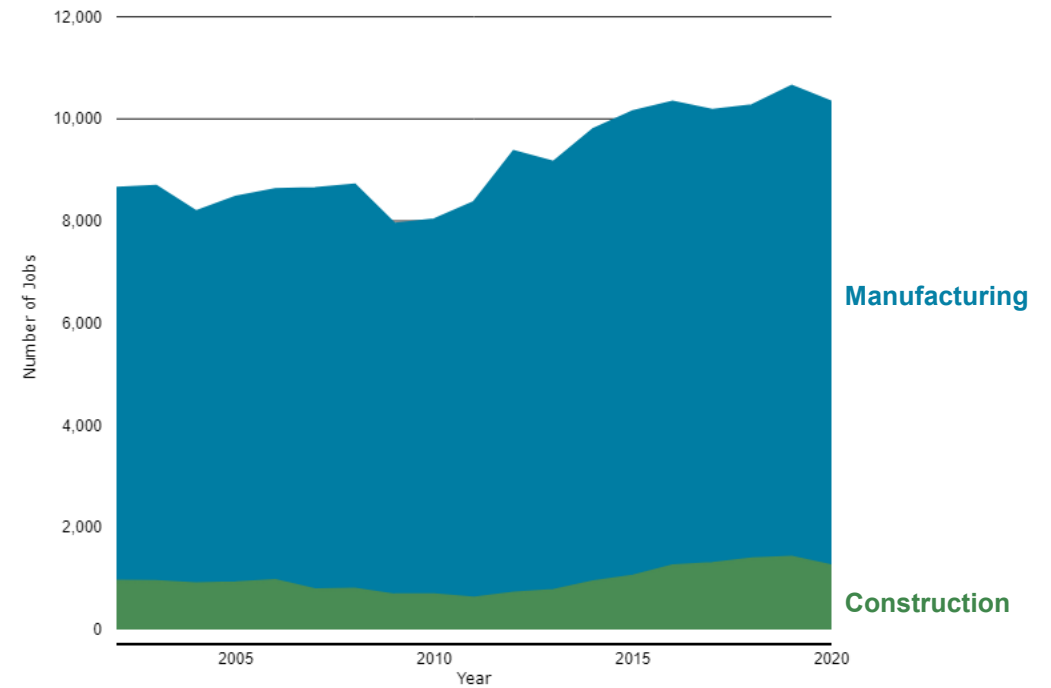
## Manufacturing concentration is significant in Mentor

Manufacturing has grown by 18% since 2002, increasing the total employment share in Mentor from 25.68% to 28.39%. Mentor’s industrial parks also contain space for expansion. Construction remains relatively constrained, however some new projects at the tail end of the 2010s drove growth.

Blue Collar Job Share: Locational Quotients



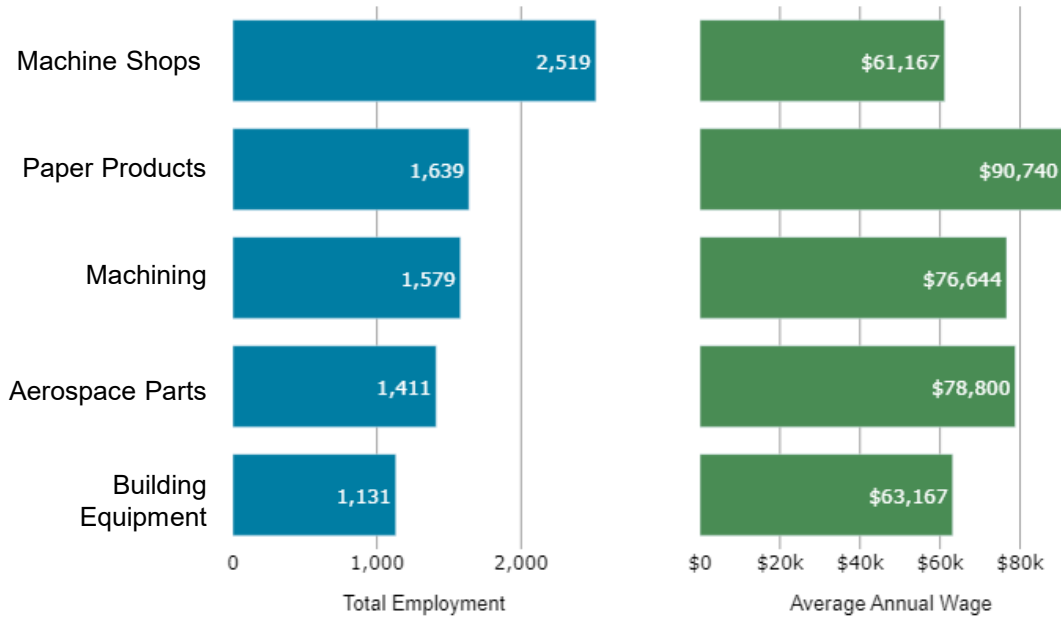
Blue Collar Industry Share



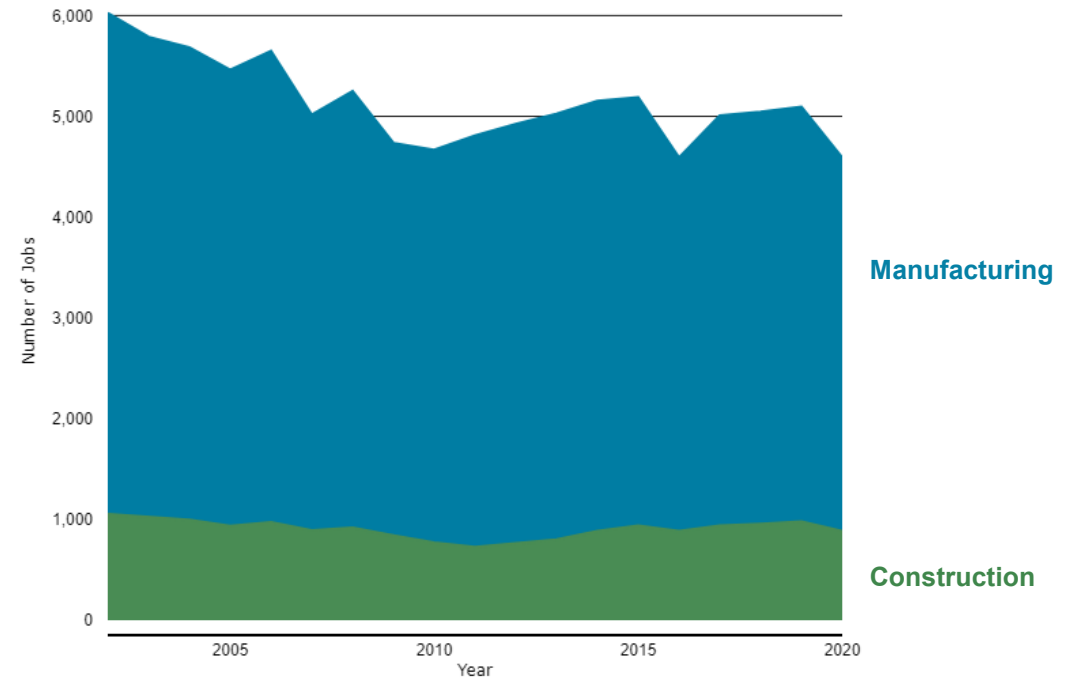
## Those who work in manufacturing has declined by 25%

Given the age of Mentor’s population, many who formerly worked in manufacturing may have retired but still live in the community. Mentor is also drawing on broader Lake County residents to work in the manufacturing sector.

Breakdown of Blue Collar Jobs in Lake County



Blue Collar Industry Share: Mentor Residents

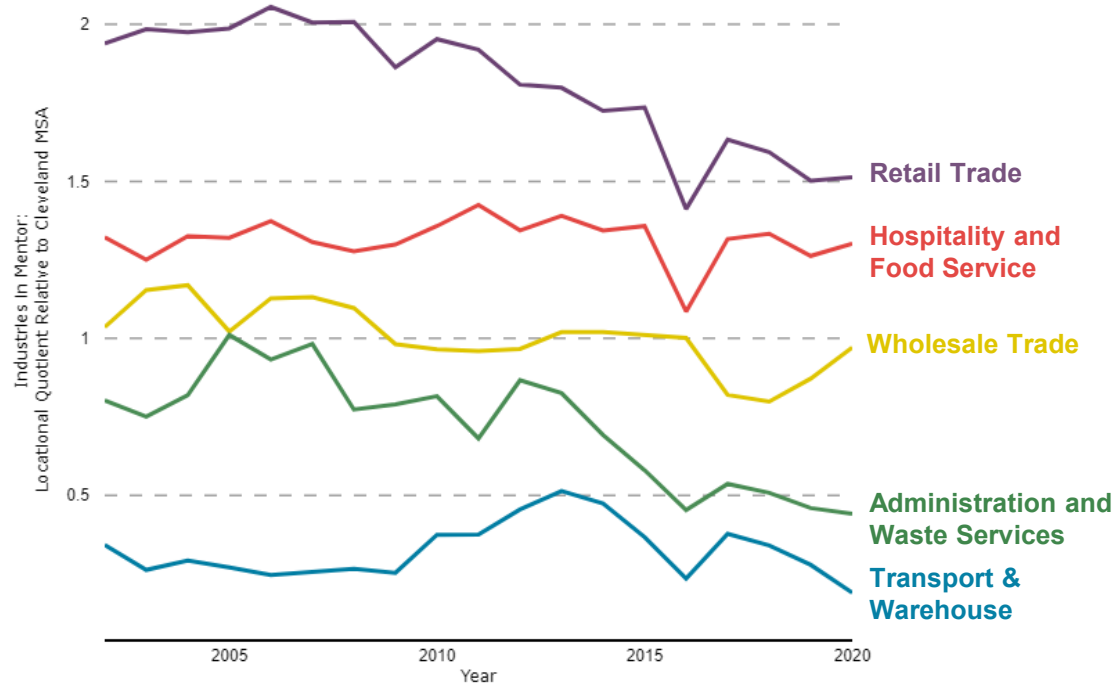




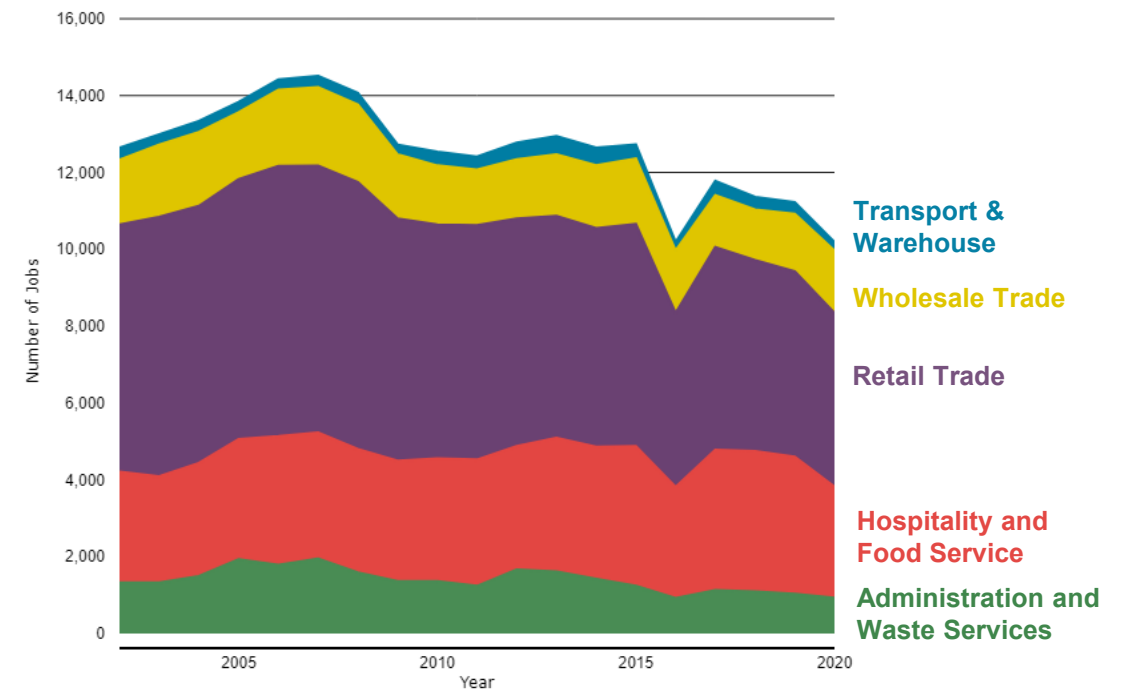
## New Economy Low Wage Jobs are declining largely due to E-Commerce, but Mentor still a major hub

E-commerce impacts large merchandisers common at sites like the Great Lakes Mall. Decline in retail vitality drove job loss. Nonetheless, retail, hospitality, and wholesale trade remain a major segment of the Mentor economy at 36% of all jobs (down from 47% in 2002).

New Economy Low Wage: Locational Quotients



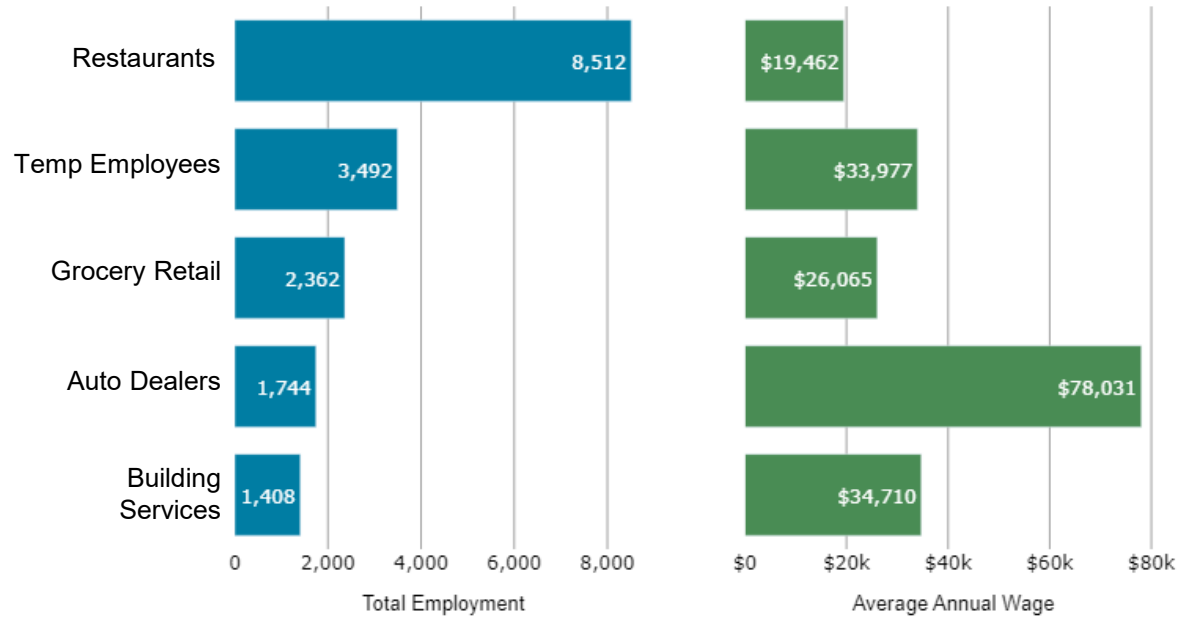
New Economy Low Wage Industry Share



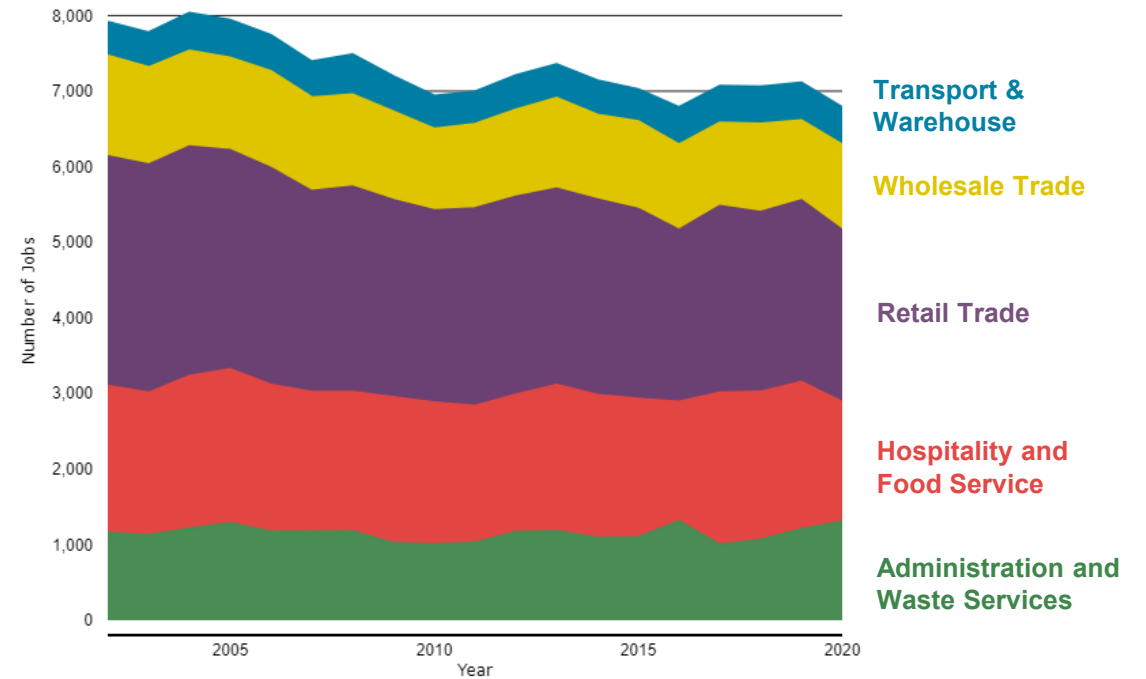
## New Economy Low Wage jobs pay far below median wages

Outside of wholesalers, New Economy Low Wage jobs earn wages far below median incomes. Many who work within Mentor would struggle to find affordable housing outside the limited multi-family rentals that do exist in town. Consequently, many live outside of Mentor and commute in.

Breakdown of New Economy Low Wage Jobs in Lake County



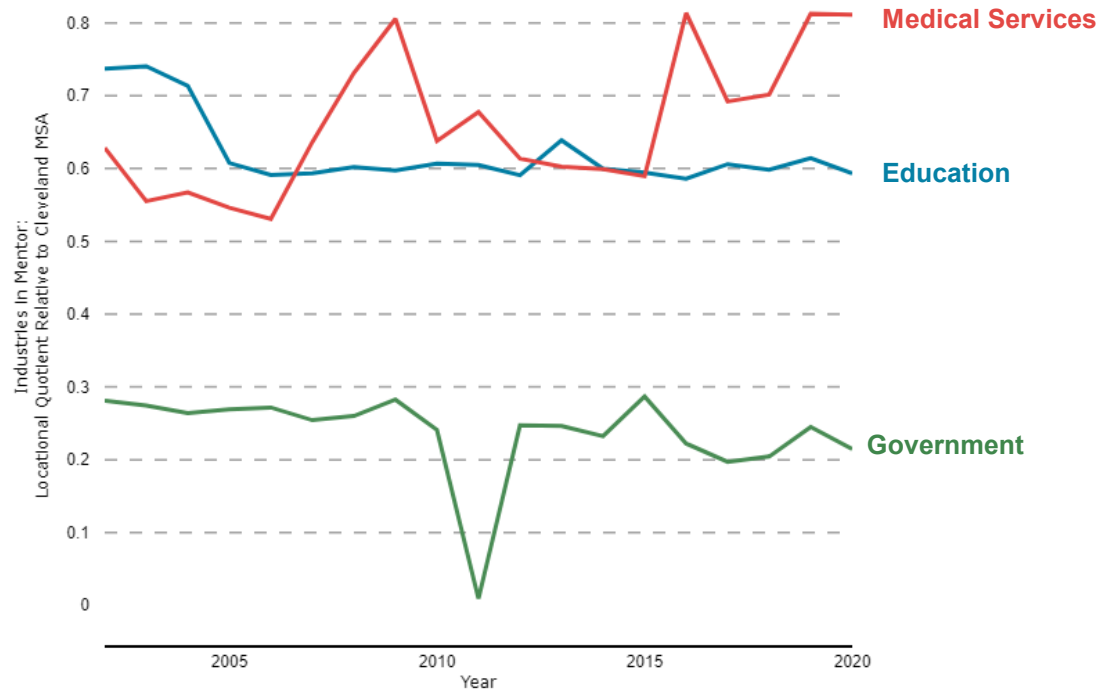
New Economy Low Wage Industry Share: Mentor Residents



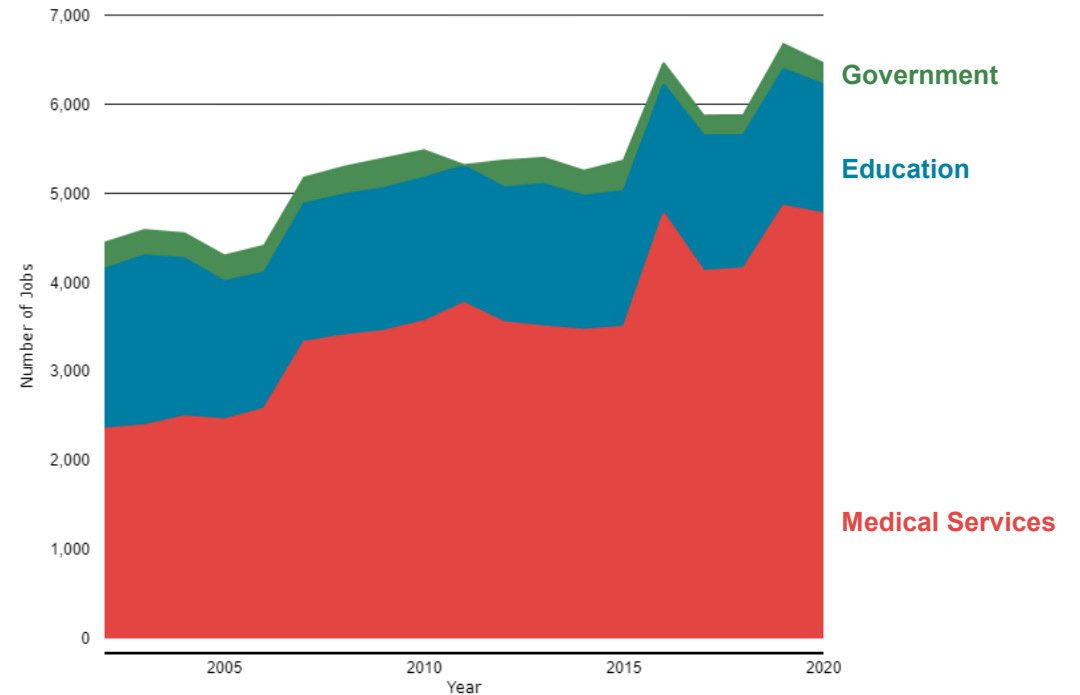
## Medical Services are growing region wide, and slightly faster in Mentor

Healthcare related industries nearly doubled since 2002, corresponding closely with an aging population and the increasing location of senior-related services in the community. Meanwhile, as school district enrollment shrinks, so has the share of people who work in education.

Eds Meds and Gov: Locational Quotients



Eds, Meds and Gov Industry Share



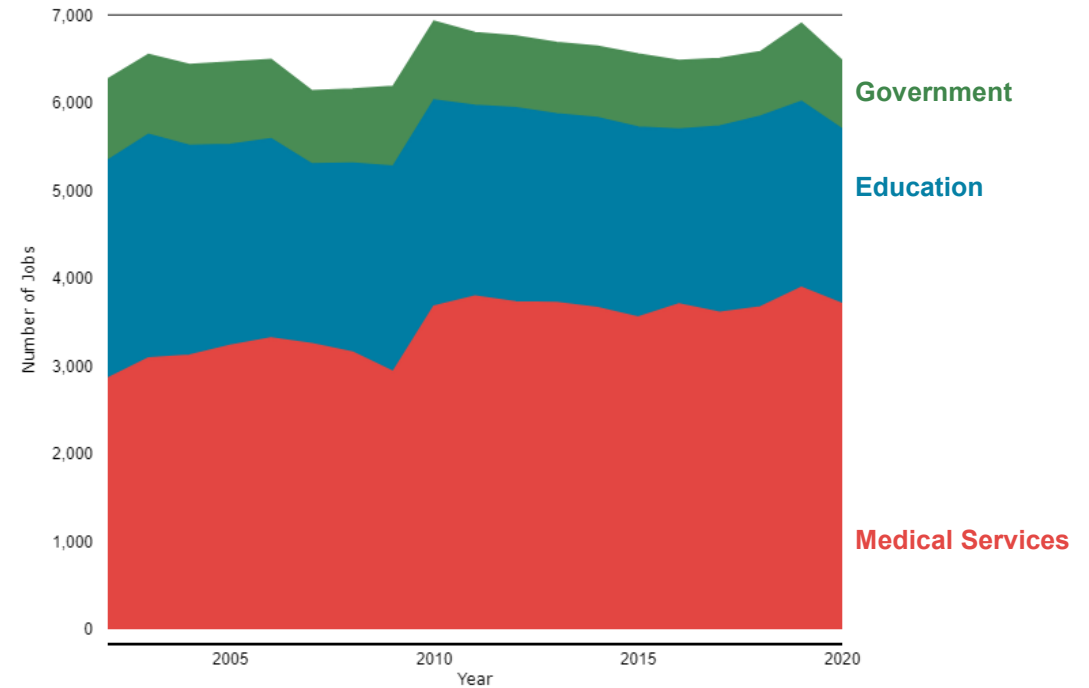
## Eds, Meds, and Gov jobs are middle-class jobs, with many choosing to live in Mentor

There is a higher proportion of people who work in the Eds, Meds, and Gov industries who live in Mentor than work in Mentor. Some of the fastest growing segments – senior and nursing care – are some of the lowest paid positions, with single-incomes often insufficient to find affordable housing in Mentor.

Breakdown of Eds, Meds and Gov Jobs in Lake County



Eds, Meds and Gov Industry Share: Mentor Residents



Source(s): OnTheMap 2002-2020

### **Mentor has a healthy and diversified economic foundation that encompasses three major planks.**

- 1. A regional manufacturing center.** 9,806 jobs – or 28% of Mentor’s job base – are in the manufacturing sector. With an average annual wage of \$70,568, manufacturing continues to provide high quality jobs that align with housing prices in the region. Manufacturing is projected to be a growing sector given continued public priorities for supporting domestic manufacturing industries. Many industrial employers view local housing supply as a crucial component for siting activities. Ensuring adequate housing can support manufacturing growth.
- 2. Manufacturing also drives new economy high wage industries.** Management, professional services, and engineering related jobs are the fastest growing segment of the economy and pay high wages. Retaining and attracting these employees across the age-spectrum may require new forms of rental and ownership housing.
- 3. Low wage services are still a major segment of the economy.** Retail and food services make up 36% of all jobs in Mentor, although the total share declined by 19% since 2010. Both the shifting consumption habits of aging families and the rise of e-commerce have impacted employment in these sectors. With low wages, workforce housing remains in demand for those who would prefer to live closer to their place of employment.
- 4. Younger working people and households struggle to find housing.** Although growth is strong in fields that require college educations, younger households may struggle to find adequate housing in Mentor that meets their needs, in particular higher-quality, new rental housing. This can detrimentally impact labor force recruitment and community vitality in the long-run.



**03**

**DEMOGRAPHIC  
TRENDS**

### Introductory Notes

Demographics are organized through snapshots and trendline data. Snapshots provide a more detailed breakdown of the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) year at the time the study was conducted, whereas trend data helps understand shifts in the local economy.

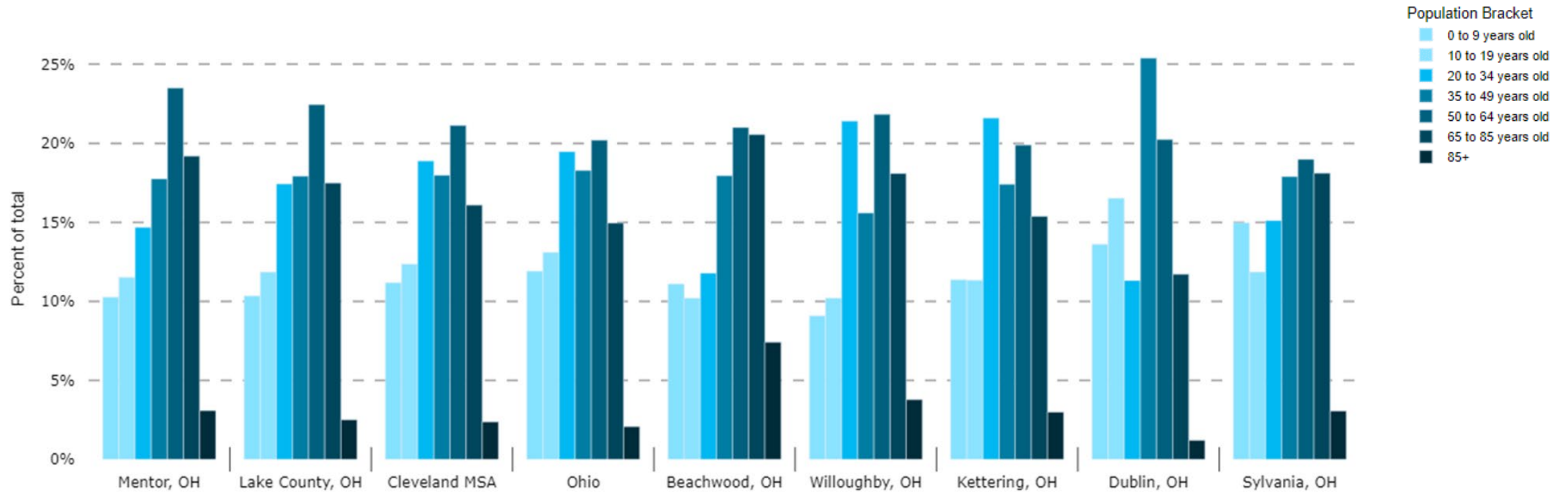
Mentor's demographics are juxtaposed against two different geographical segments. The first examines 'nested' geographies, including Lake County, the Cleveland metropolitan area, and the state of Ohio. The second examines Mentor alongside comparable cities. The cities were selected with city staff based on similar attributes – primarily suburban Ohio cities that have fostered both comparable and different developmental trajectories than Mentor. They include:

- 1) Beachwood, OH – An eastern suburb of Cleveland, Beachwood has an aging, upper-middle class population. Similar to Mentor, turnover is beginning to occur as empty-nesters move out of single-family neighborhoods.
- 2) Willoughby, OH – Willoughby is adjacent to Mentor to the west. Willoughby has added more multi-family rental units than Mentor, helping to diversify the community by age and income.
- 3) Kettering, OH – Kettering is a first ring suburb of Dayton with a similar economic, population, and housing composition as Mentor. Similar to Mentor, it has an aging population. It has added a higher ratio of multi-family housing, helping add greater age diversity to the community.
- 4) Dublin, OH – Dublin is a higher-income suburb of Columbus with an economy rooted in New Economy High Wage industries. The city contains a mix of housing types including single-family homes, condominiums, and apartments. Investment into parks and mixed-use amenity districts continue to attract young millennial families.
- 5) Sylvania, OH – Sylvania is a suburb of Toledo with a similar composition of households and housing stock to Mentor. An aging community, Sylvania has continued to invest in a range of housing types to attract new residents to the community. Plans have focused on adding density and a range of amenities to the community, making it a desirable place to live.

## Mentor's population is older

Mentor's population is skewed toward older households, especially in the 50-85 years old age range. In prime retirement age, many are empty-nesters living in former family homes. Other suburbs have retained and attracted younger working-age households aged 20-34 at a higher rate than Mentor.

### Population by Age Bracket

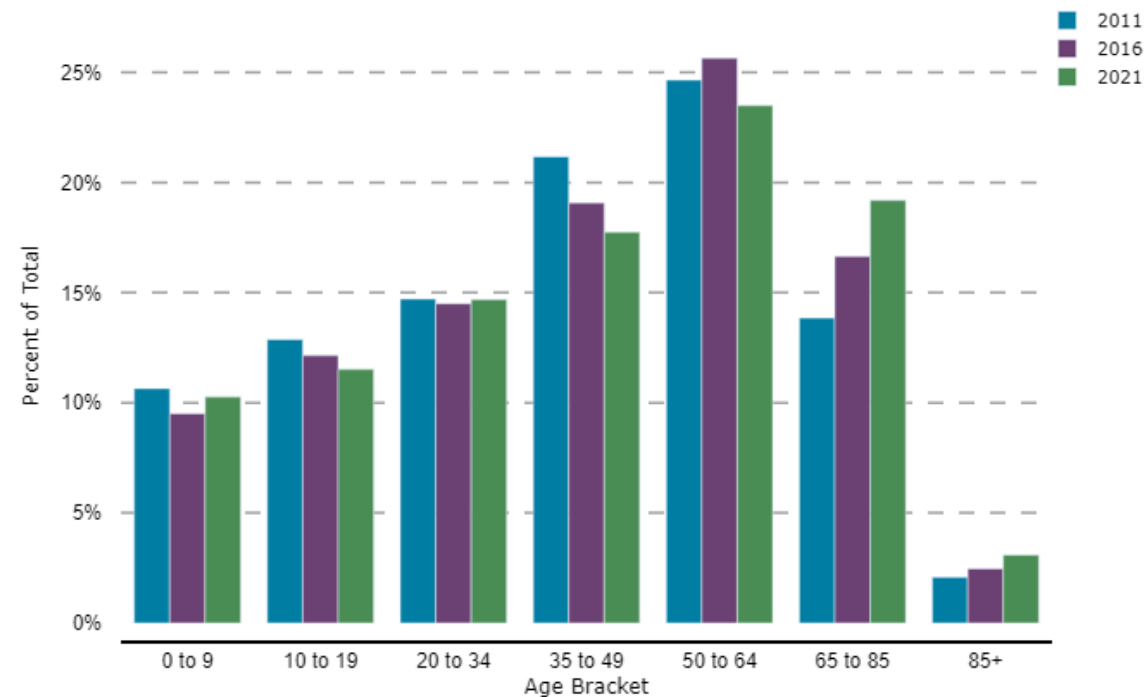




## Mentor's population is shifting from early empty-nesters to prime retirement age

The fastest growing age bracket is the 65-85 range. There has been a marked decrease in prime career and family-raising aged households aged 35-49. The rate of increase of 65-85 is both from people aging in place and in-migration to newly built senior communities.

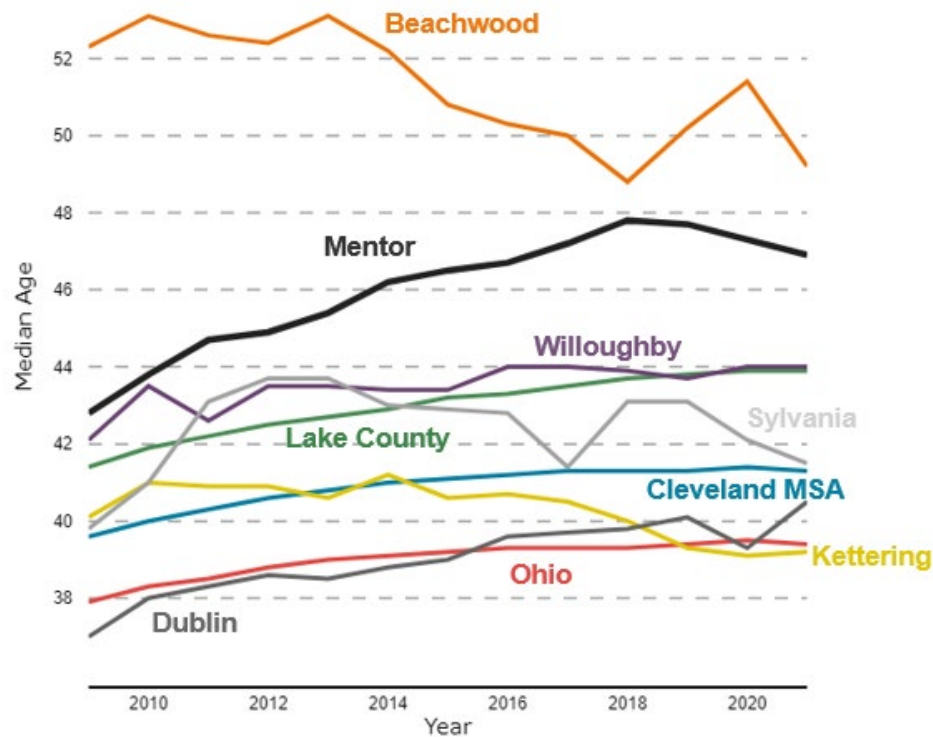
Mentor Age Bracket: Net Change



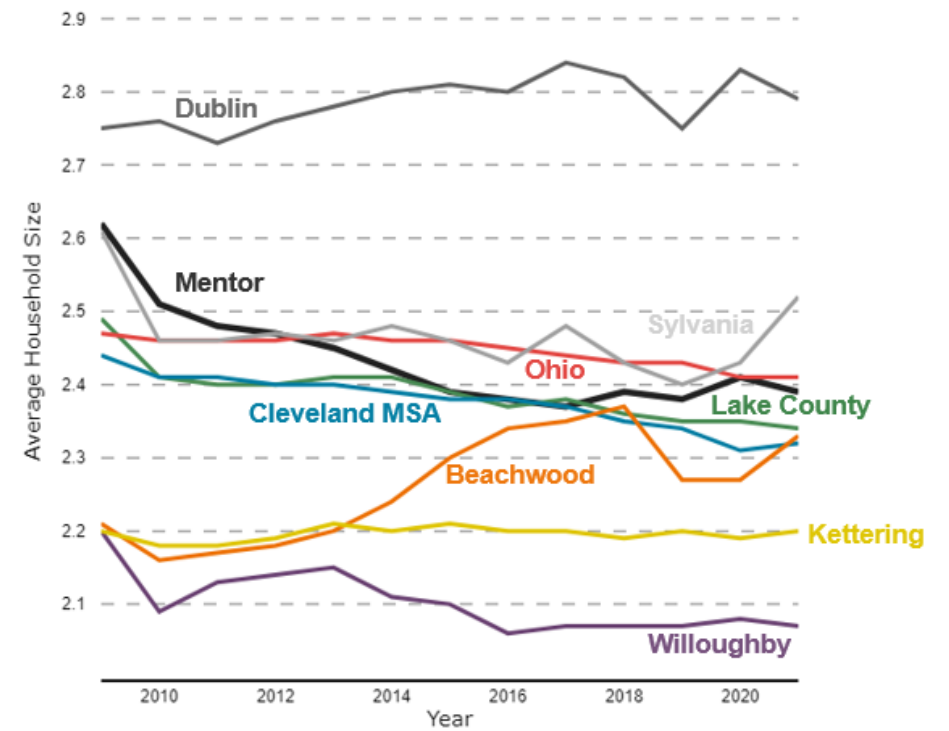
## Mentor's Median Age is Getting Older, and is older than all but Beachwood

Formerly a suburb for middle-class families, Mentor is trending towards older, empty-nesters. Beachwood is the only town with an older population, albeit Beachwood is turning over faster than Mentor towards younger households. Many similar first ring suburbs are attracting higher rates of younger families than Mentor.

Median Age Trendline



Household Size Trendline

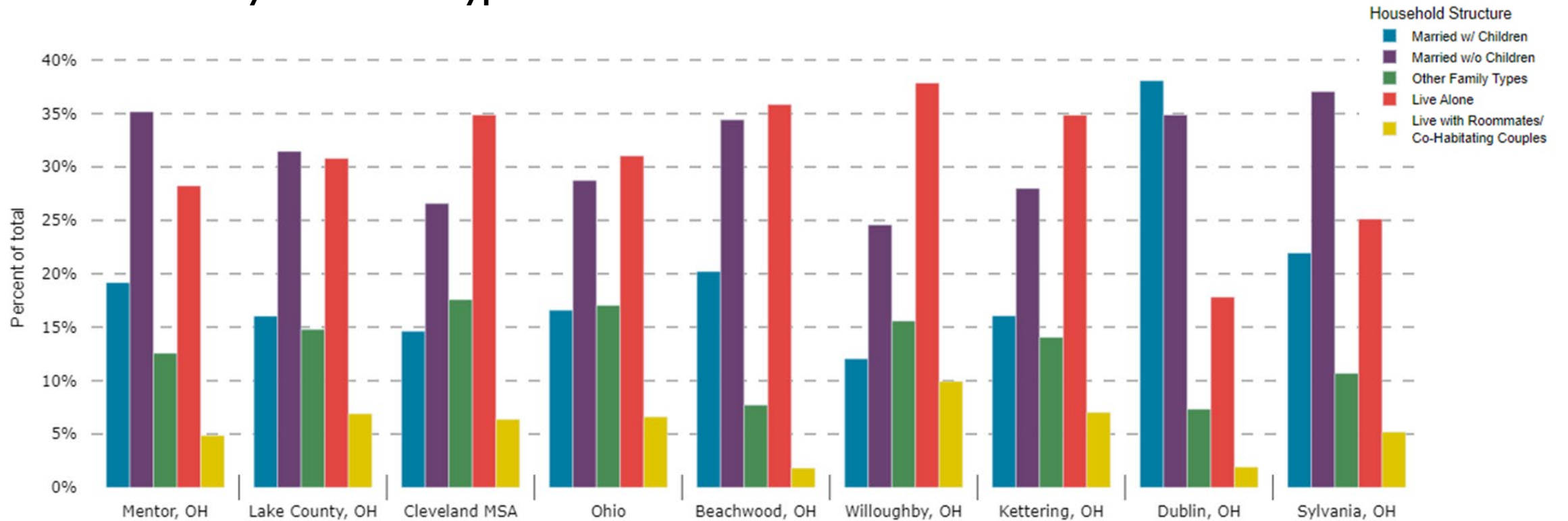


Source(s): ACS, 5 year estimates, 2009-2021

## Mentor's largest family type are Married Families without Children

Mentor's single-family houses are slowly turning over from aging empty-nesters to younger households with families. Save Sylvania, Mentor has the highest ratio of empty-nesters. While Mentor has a higher proportion of families than the County and broader Metro, a higher ratio may be expected given the dominance of single-family housing in Mentor relative to elsewhere.

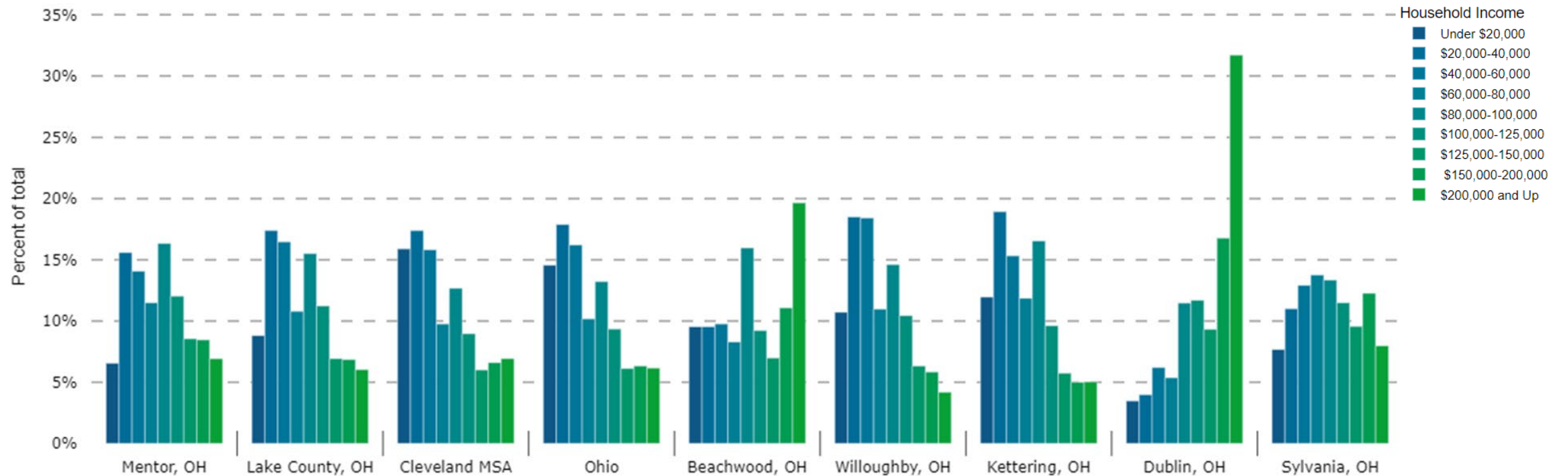
### Household Structure by Household Type



## Mentor contains higher proportions of middle and upper-middle income households

Mentor is a middle-class suburb, with a balanced income distribution around the city median. Dominated by single-family detached housing types in a good school district and with an economy rooted in the manufacturing sector, Mentor continues to be a strong residential hub for middle-income households.

### Household Income by Income Bracket

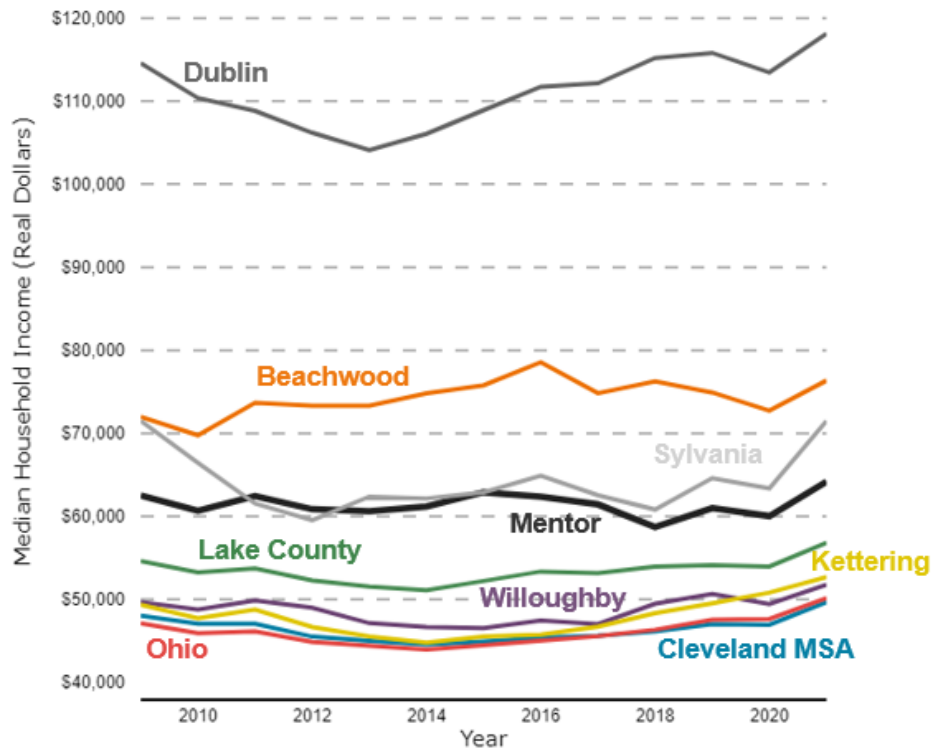


Source(s): ACS, 5-year estimates, 2021

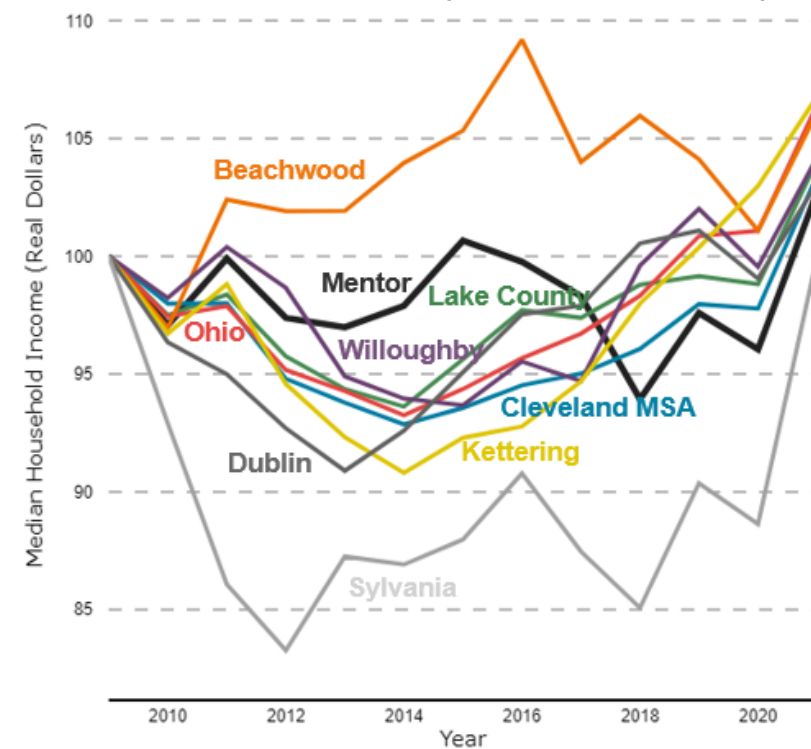
## Mentor's median income is relatively high for the Metro

Mentor's median income is higher than the Cleveland Metro and Lake County. Where many communities experience net negative income gains during the 2010s, Mentor's wage largely kept pace with inflation. In 2019 and 2020 as labor markets tightened, Mentor's wage growth increased in real terms alongside the broader region, finally surpassing 2009 values.

Median Household Income (Real Dollars)



Median Household Income Index (Real Dollars)

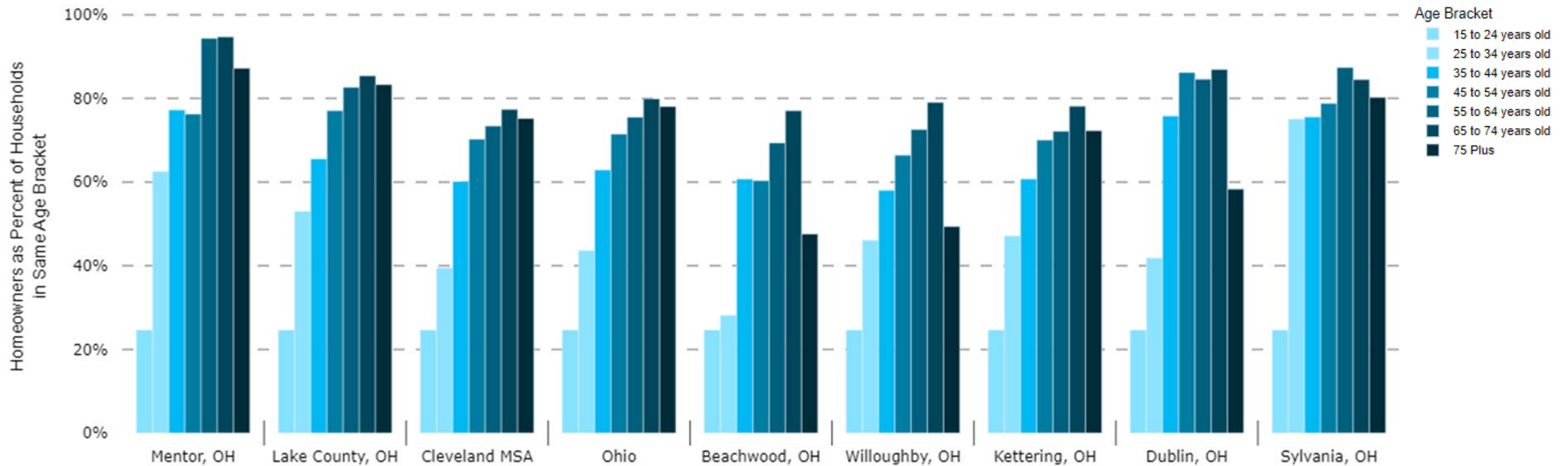


Source(s): ACS, 5 year estimates, 2009-2021

## Homeownership rates are high across age groups

Given the lower proportion of multi-family housing in Mentor, homeownership rates reflect the prioritization of ownership-based housing. Homeownership rates are also very high for seniors 75+, pointing towards potential opportunity for neighborhood turnover and transition as older householders move to more suitable housing.

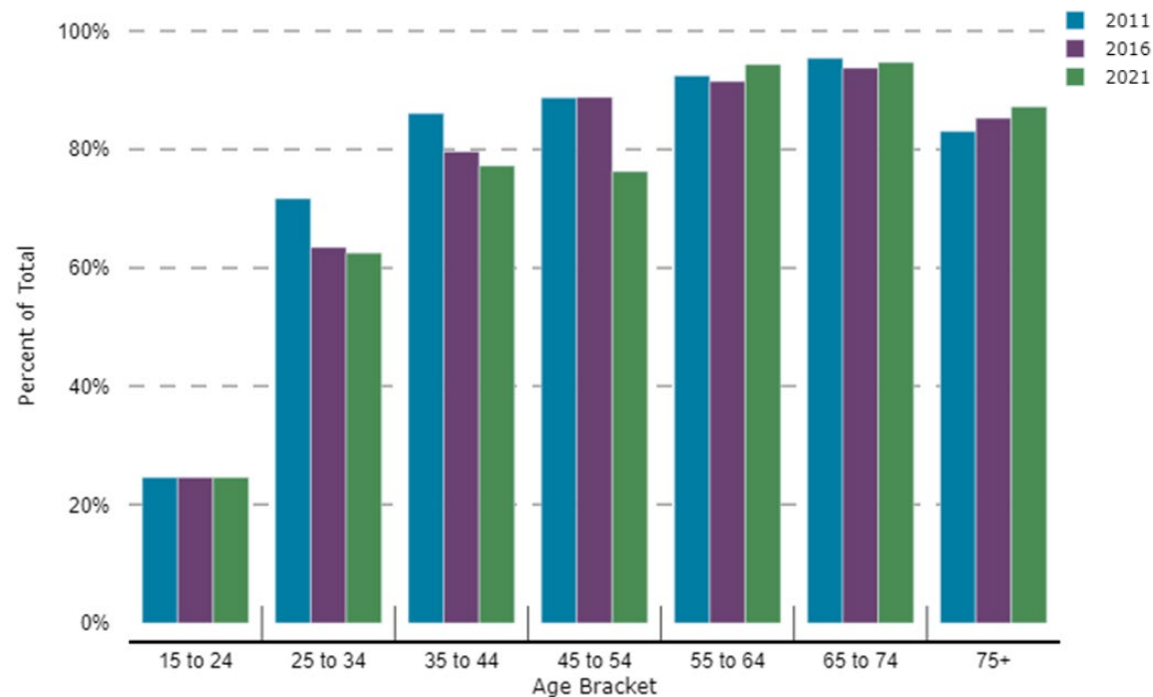
### Homeownership by Age Bracket



## Younger households face increasing obstacles to homeownership

Despite no new rental housing in Mentor, a growing proportion of younger households are renting. This reflects trends nationwide as millennials face headwinds to home ownership, often making renting a more practical economic solution. Many households may also be renting single-family homes currently owned by older residents who maintain an investment property.

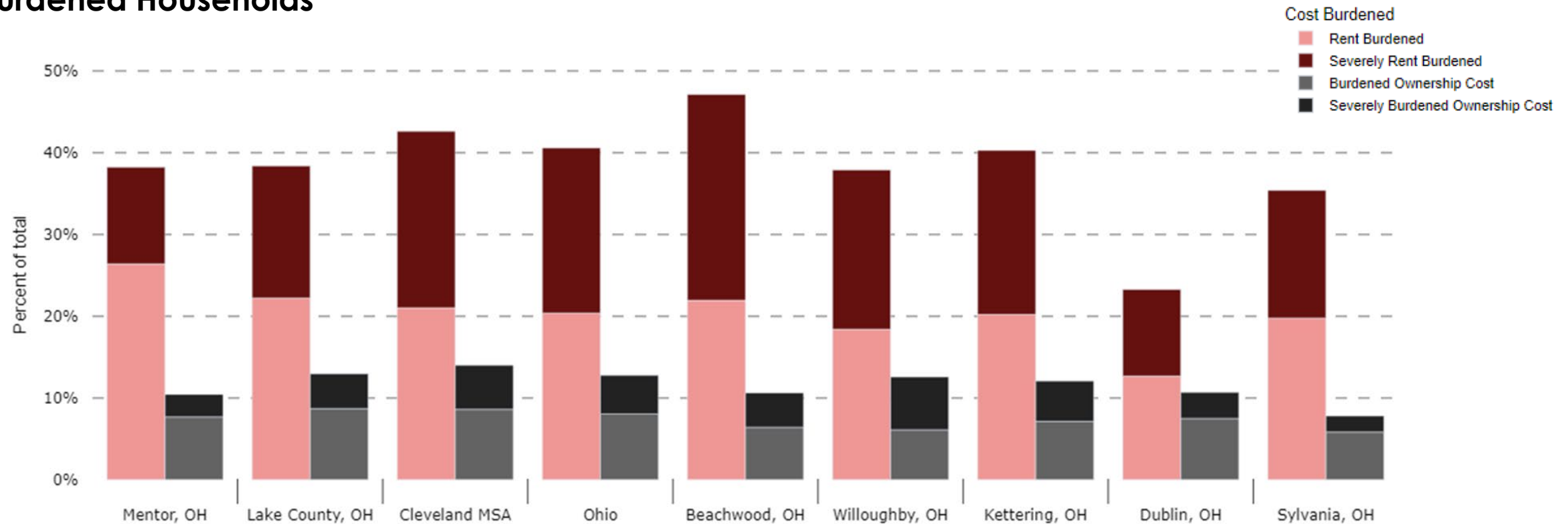
Mentor Home Ownership by Age Bracket: Net Change



## Cost burdened renters remain high, but not uniquely so

Housing is considered affordable when a household spends 30% or less of their income on housing. Mentor’s higher median income and older, less expensive apartments combine to lower the proportion of households who are severely rent burdened (more than 50% of income goes to housing costs). Nonetheless, with a sizeable portion of the regional economy in lower wage jobs and few affordable housing options, 39% of renters still pay more than 30% or more of their income in rent (rent burdened). This indicates that demand would be robust for affordable housing units.

### Cost Burdened Households

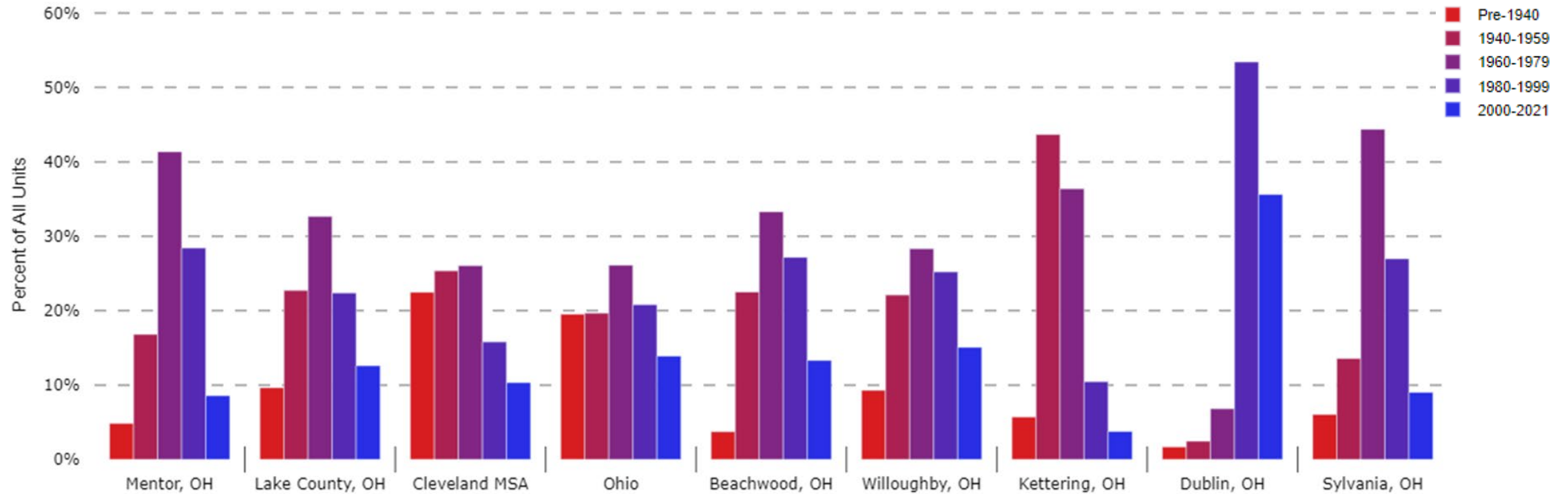




## Mentor's houses are increasingly dated

With 40% of housing units built between 1960-1980, much of Mentor's housing stock is aging. As the housing stock ages, rehabilitation and maintenance becomes increasingly important, potentially straining Mentor's older residents.

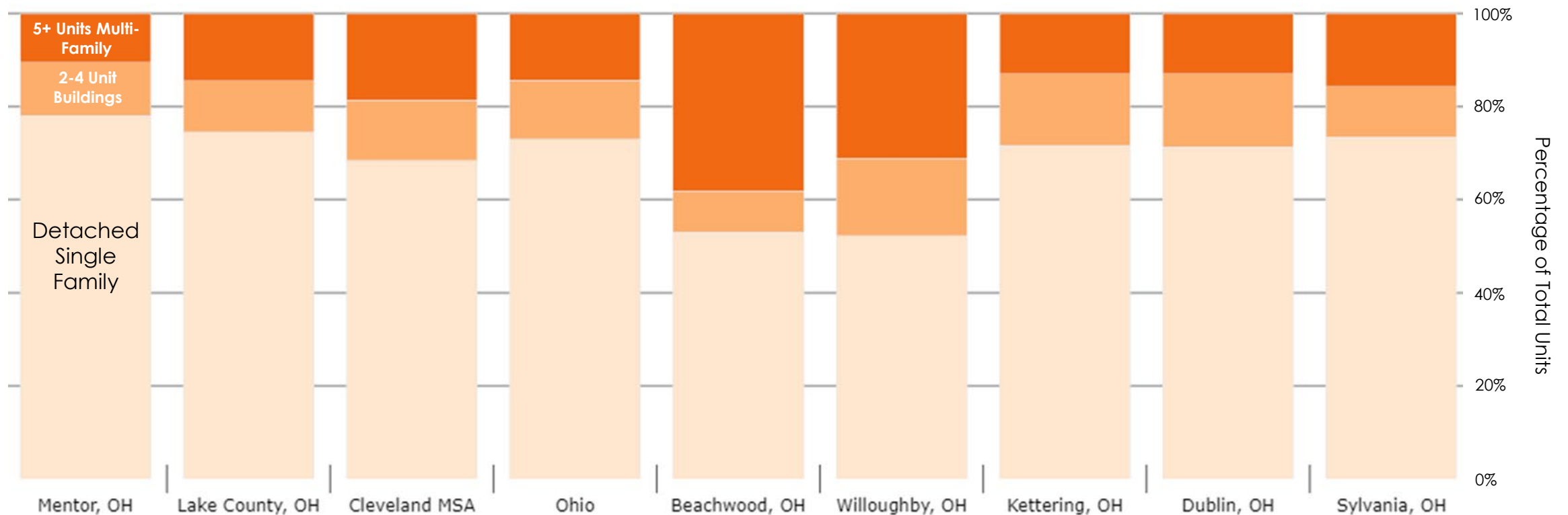
### Residential Structures by Year Built



## Single-Family detached homes predominate

While some multi-family was constructed in the 1960s-1970s, Mentor has not added a range of higher-density housing types, reinforcing the low-density suburban feel. Consequently, Mentor’s lack of housing diversity can impact its ability to attract and retain a diversity of households, including younger households who value more amenity rich neighborhoods.

### Residential Structure by Building Type

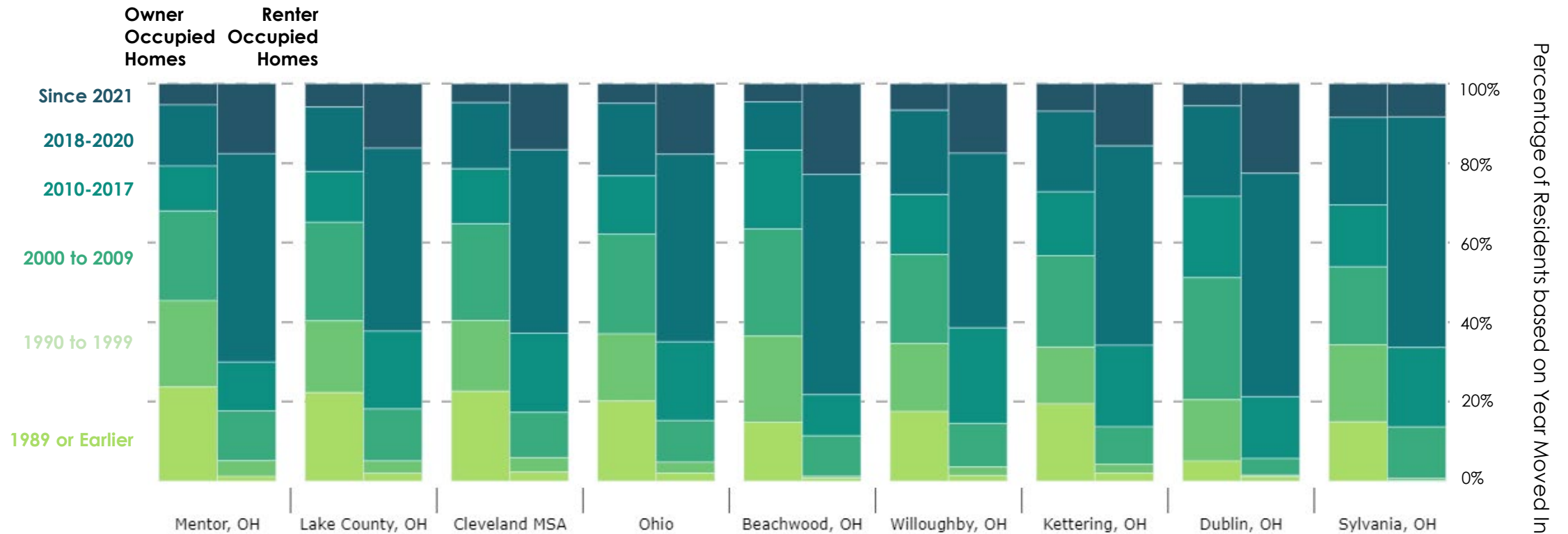


Source(s): ACS, 5-year estimates, 2021

## Turnover is very low in owner-occupied homes

Relative to all other comparison cities, more than 40% of owner-occupied units have been occupied by the same owner since before 2000, and 21% since before 1990. There is also high turnover in the rental market, with more than 70% of households living in units they moved into in the past 5 years.

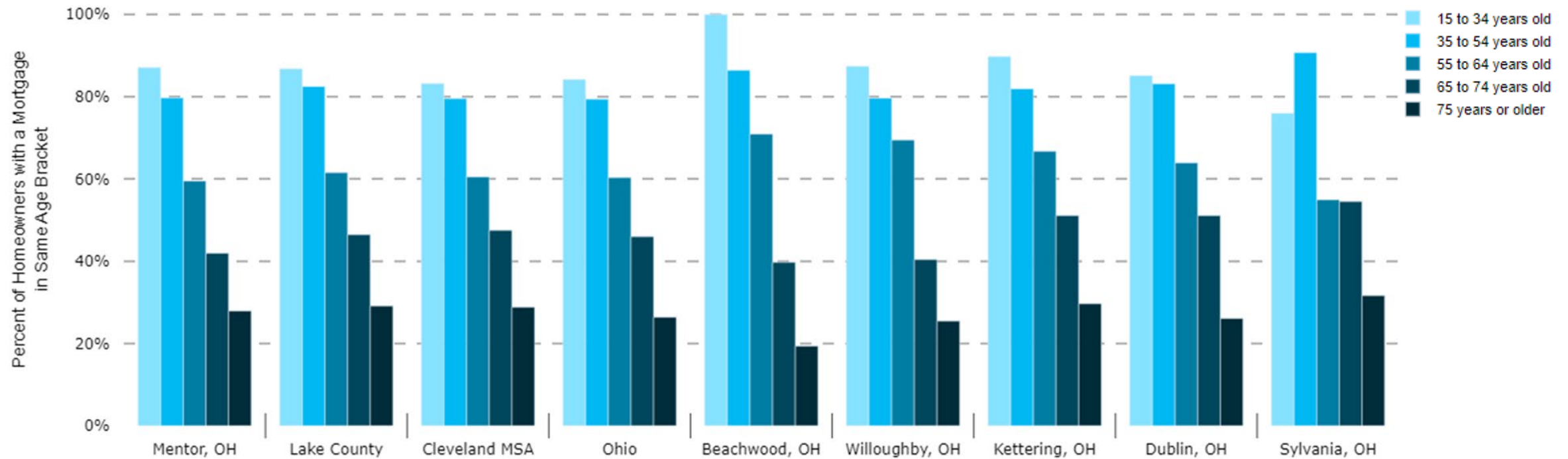
### Year Current Tenant Moved Into Unit based on Tenure



## Due to lower turnover, many own homes outright

The proportion of households with a mortgage is lower across the board, but especially so amongst older householders. Outright homeownership can help lower financial stress for aging-in-place, but also indicates that turnover is limited.

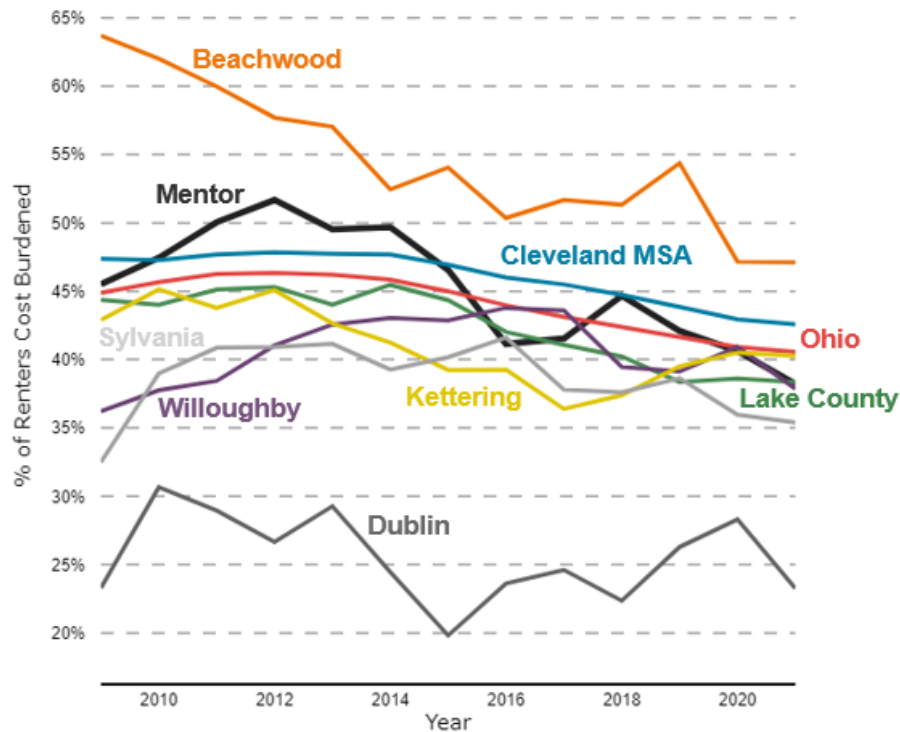
### Percent of Homeowners with a Mortgage by Age Bracket



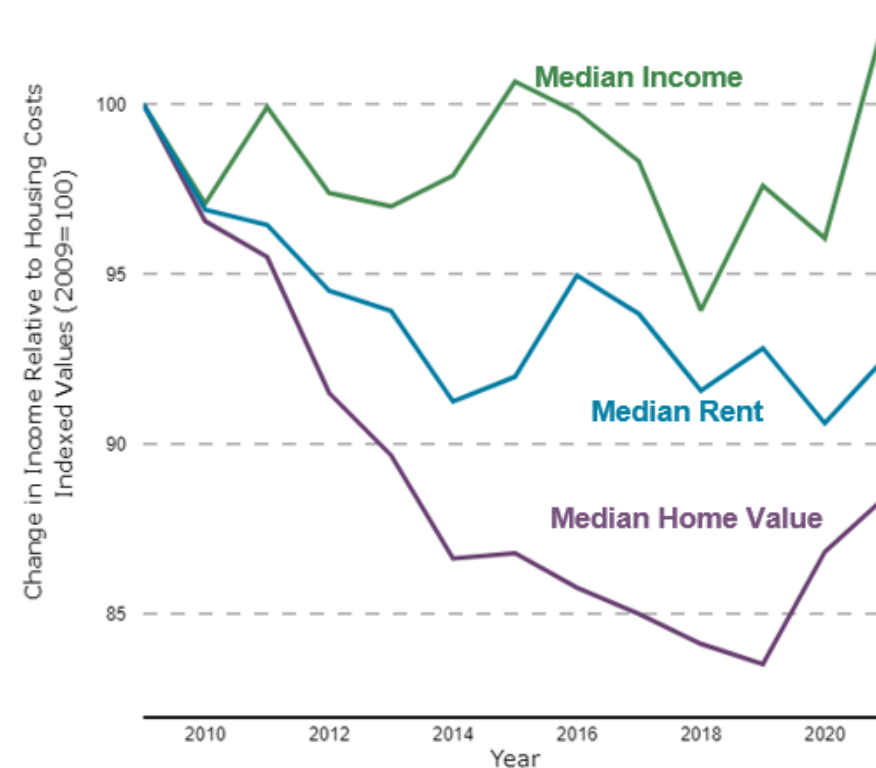
## Breaking with national trends, real incomes are increasing faster than rents and home values

Median incomes have largely kept pace with inflation, whereas real home values and rents have not fully recovered from the housing crisis of 2007-2008. Consequently, the proportion of rent burdened households has fallen from a high of 51% during the long recovery, to below 40% today. This trend is common across Ohio, bucking nationwide trends.

Rent Burdened Index



Rent and Home Value Growth Relative to Incomes



Source(s): ACS, 5-year estimates, 2021

### Differences *within* Mentor

Mentor is a relatively homogenous community. Demographic differences largely follow different housing types in the community.

Mentor's multi-family and lighter-density housing types are located near commercial and industrial zoned areas. These census tracts tend to have lower household incomes, are on average younger in age, are more likely to be foreign-born or people of color, and have a higher proportion of both renters and cost-burdened renters. Despite living in smaller housing units, household size tends to be larger, with this tract having the largest proportion of under-18 children (24% of the tract). Younger families are balanced out by a higher rate of 65+ persons (25% of the tract compared to 21% of Mentor as a whole), as many empty-nesters and older single-adults live in smaller housing units (condominiums, townhomes or apartments). Given shorter commute

times, many are more likely to work in the community rather than outside.

Conversely, older, wealthier households are concentrated in Mentor's single-family neighborhoods. These census tracts are in the southeast corner of town and north of the Lakeland Freeway. In general, these tracts have more owner-occupied homes, have smaller household sizes despite larger homes, and have low rates of cost-burdened renters and homeowners.

In the most northeastern portions of Mentor, north of the Mentor Marsh, more affordable homes exist due to smaller lot sizes and more affordable housing types. This area provides most homes affordable to workforce householders. Household incomes tend to be lower, household sizes tend to be small (fewer children, but also fewer elderly), and higher rates of cost-burdened home-owners exist. This area has

the largest concentration of those at or near retirement age (31% are between 50-69).

Demographic transition appears to be furthest along in census tracts north of Lakeland Freeway, east of Mentor Headlands Golf Course, but south of the Mentor Marsh where more households have recently moved into the community relative to other tracts. Here, larger single-family homes are transitioning away from empty-nesters and towards families with children, with 23% of the tract under age 18, a figure 20% higher than Mentor as a whole (19%). Households have higher incomes, are more likely to have a bachelors or post-graduate degree, and are more likely to work in New Economy High Wage jobs both in Mentor and in Cleveland.

### An aging community

- 1. Mentor's Population is Aging:** The median age is 47 years old. 35% of households consist of married couples without children – 4% higher than Lake County and 10% higher than the Cleveland Metro. 20.7% of 65+ householders live in homes they bought prior to 2000 with the majority having fully paid off their mortgage. This limits new housing supply and turnover.
- 2. Demand Persists from Younger Households:** In the northeast segment of Mentor, higher home turnover is lowering the median age as younger households move in, indicating that demand is strong for Mentor's single-family housing from younger family-age households. This is less common in the majority of Mentor which is experiencing low turnover as senior's age in larger homes.
- 3. Households Income are higher than regional averages:** Mentor is a middle-class suburb in Lake County, with incomes growing faster than rents and home values. Nonetheless, many households – in particular single-income householders – remain cost burdened. Given the high proportion of lower wage service sector jobs, many who work in the community may be unable to afford housing.
- 4. Aging in Place and Neighborhood Turnover:** Mentor's neighborhoods are primed for generation turnover as seniors move into more suitable/desired homes with less maintenance requirements. As they vacate, this increases supply of housing appropriate for families. The transition is dependent, however, on the availability of appropriate housing stock for seniors aging in place and community attributes that attract millennial families.
- 5. Fewer Younger Working-Age Households:** Mentor's number of prime early-career working age households is smaller than many locations, largely due to the lack of appropriate housing types suitable to this demographic. Job growth is strong in key jobs that require this cohort, so ensuring appropriate housing types may help workers live closer to their place of employment and help retain younger people who want to live in Mentor.



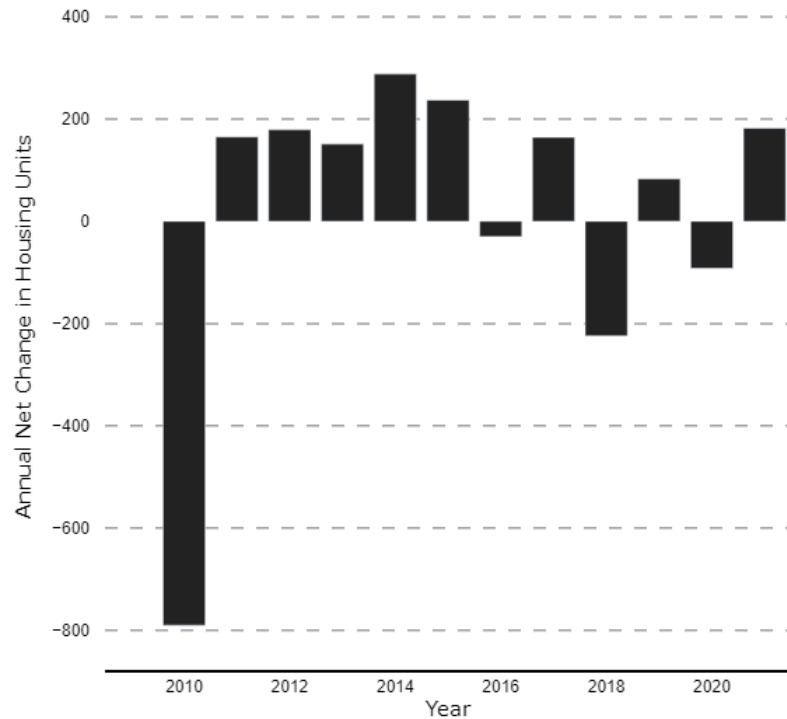
**04**  
**MARKET**  
**INDICATORS**



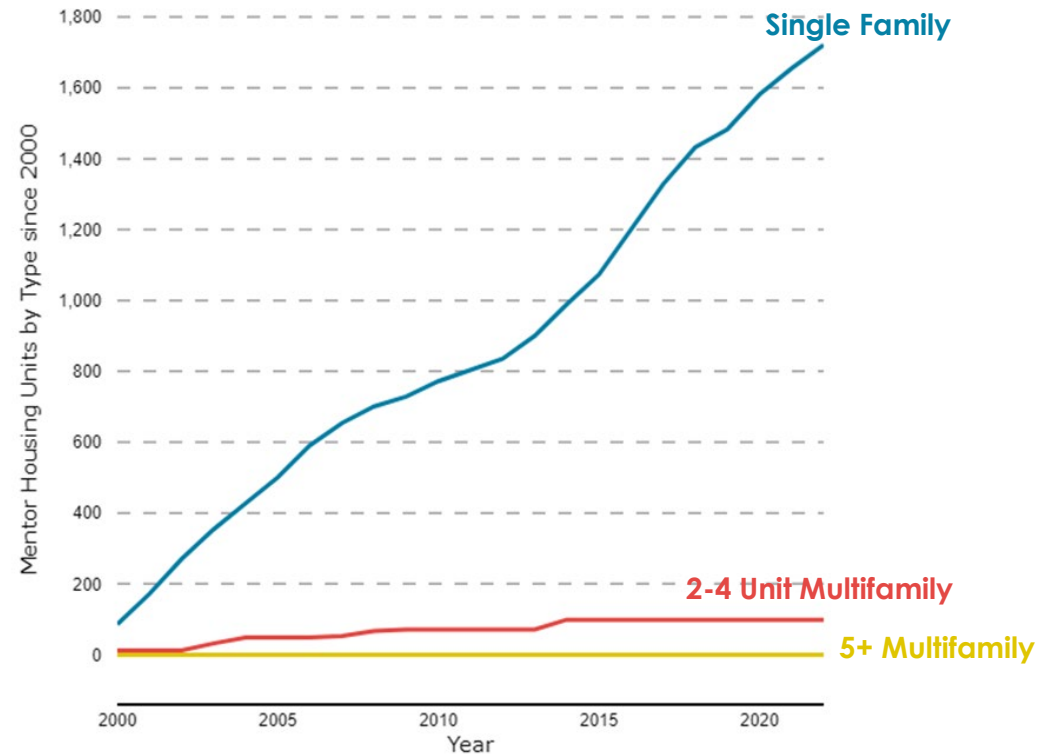
## Mentor's new housing is predominantly single-family detached units

New subdivisions have added single-family homes. Even as developable land shrinks, urban redevelopment towards multi-family units (either for rental or ownership) remain extremely limited, a stark aberration from national and suburban trends.

Annual Net Change of Single-Family Units Since 2009



Mentor Housing Units Built by Type Since 2000

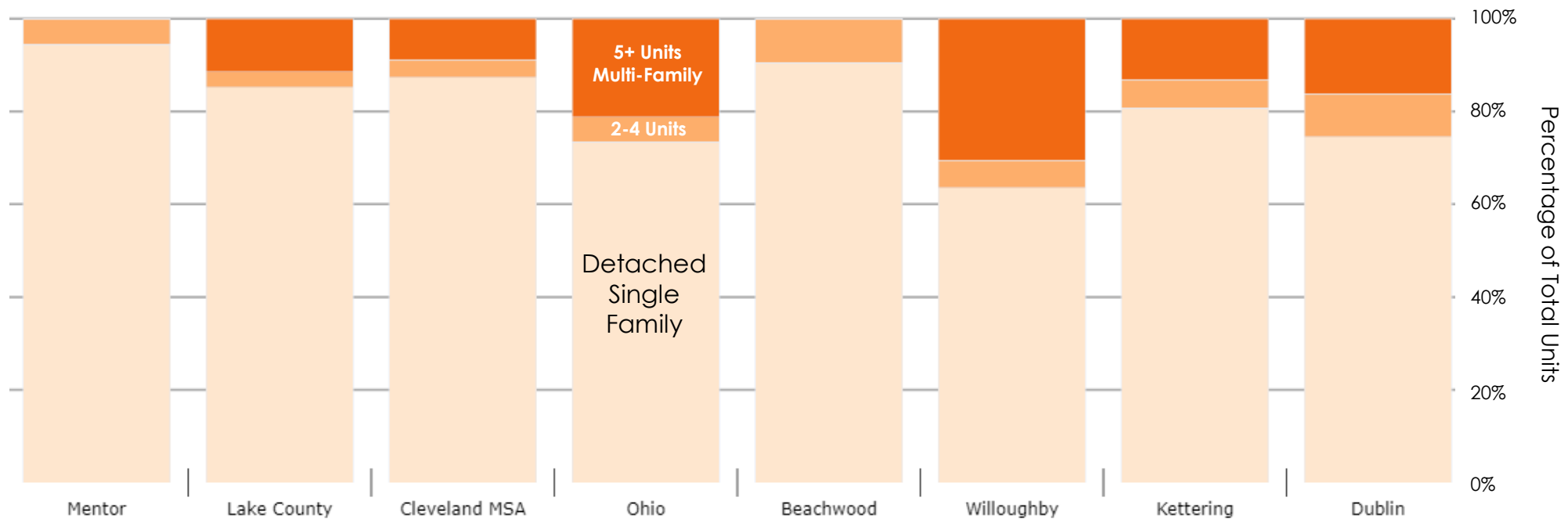


Source(s): ACS, 5-year estimates, 2009-2021; SOCDS Building Permits Database

## Redevelopment is common, just not in Mentor

Nationwide, overlapping forces have supported building multi-family housing, especially since the financial crisis. In Mentor, recent development is almost *entirely* single-family homes. This bucks both national and regional trends. The lack of housing diversity is stark, limiting the attractiveness of Mentor to a range of households who may not prefer a single-family home.

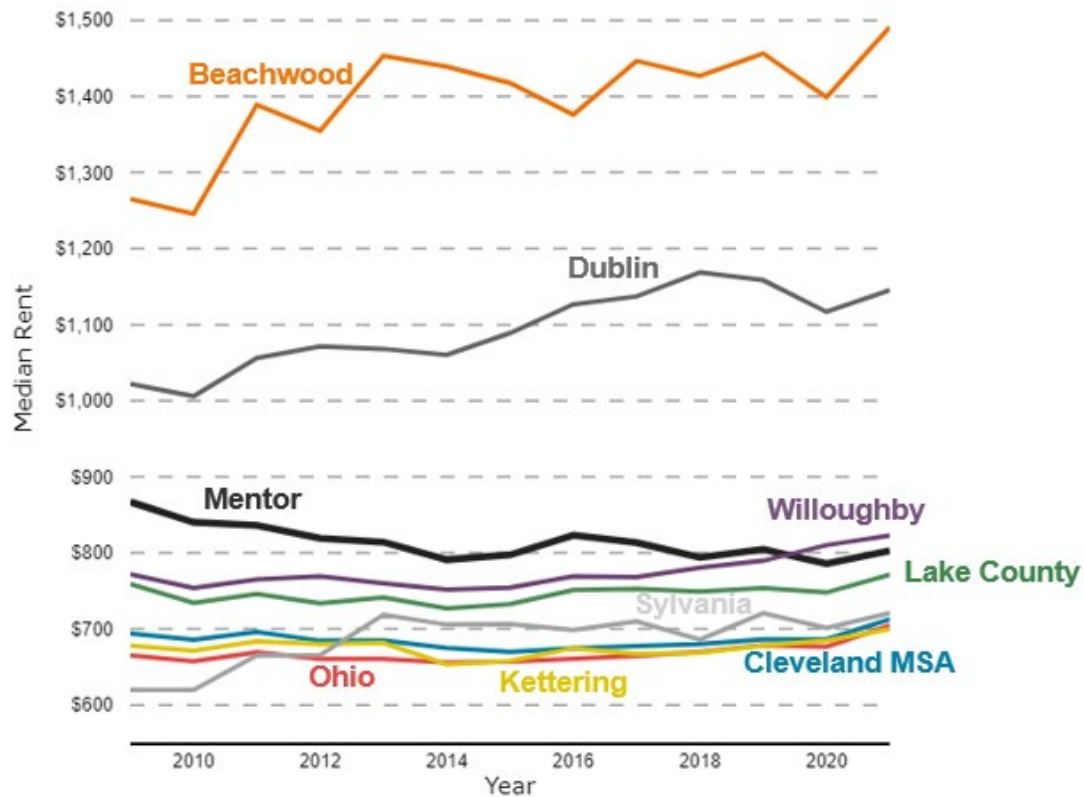
Permitted Units by Building Type as a Proportion of Total Units



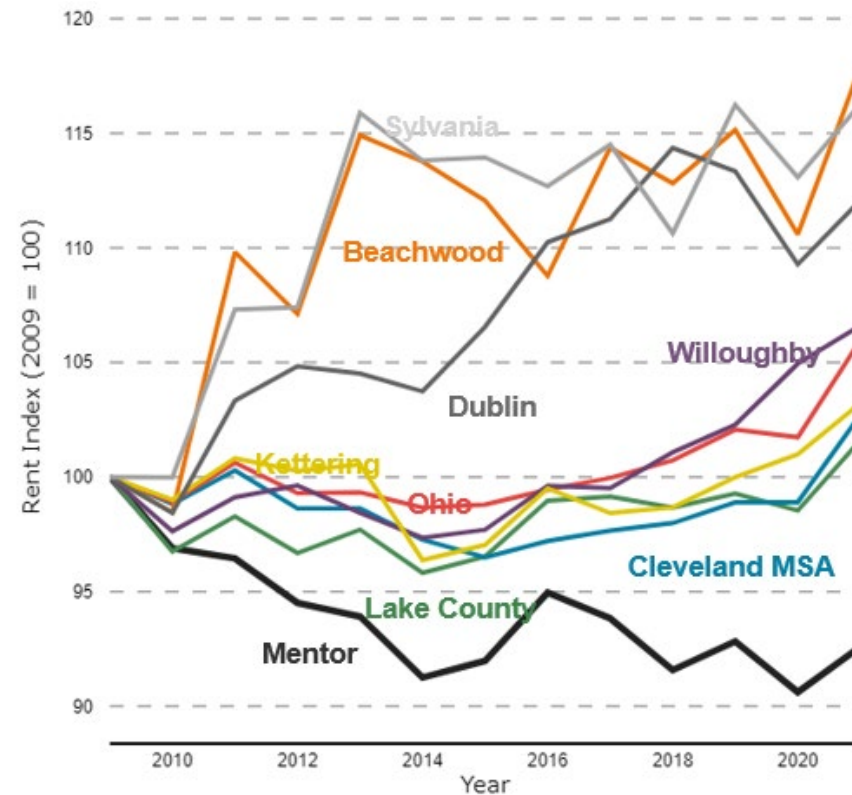
## Mentor's Rents are relatively high, but growth is stalling

Mentor is a desirable place to live. However, even with its desirability, its vacancy rates are higher than regional averages and its rent growth significantly underperforming regional and comparison geographies. So even as the community is in demand, the rental housing stock is increasingly obsolete, lacking the kind of units and amenities being added elsewhere.

Median Gross Rent



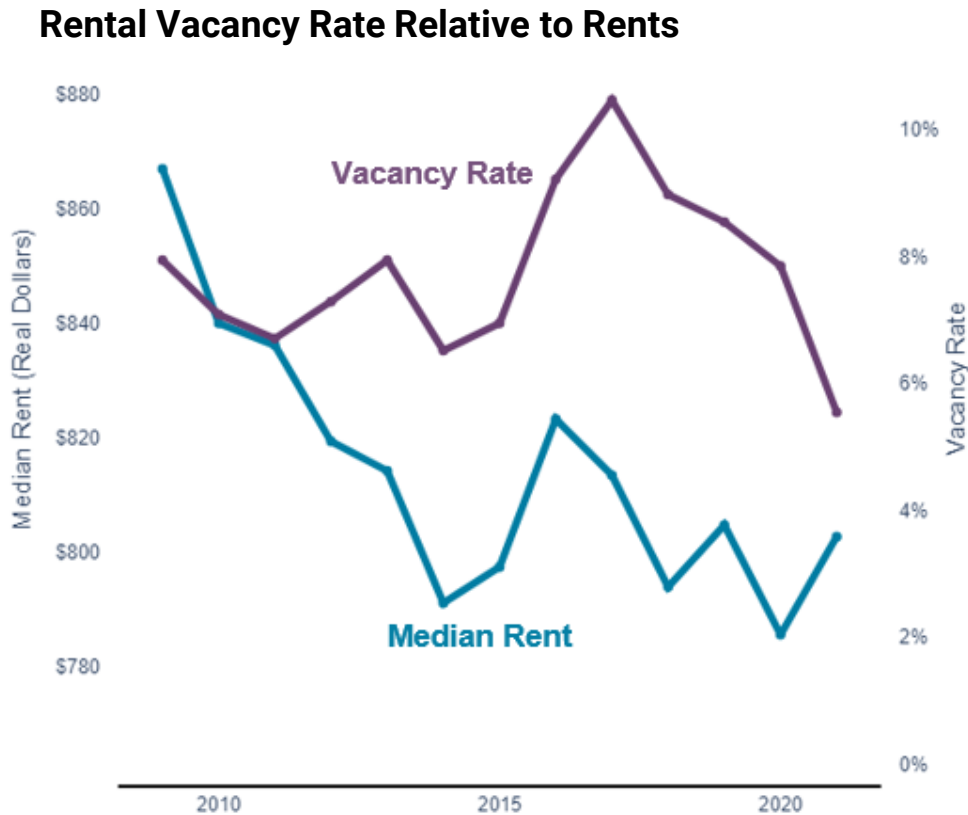
Median Rent Index



Source(s): ACS, 5-year estimates, 2009-2021

## Vacancy rates have remained relatively high, depressing rent increases

Rental vacancy rates have remained between 5-10%. As vacancy rates dip towards 5%, rents have tended to increase. The only addition to rental housing has been from the rental of single-family homes. The low demand for rental stock is complicated by the age of existing rental housing, with much of the rental product outdated relative to competing markets.



Vacancy rates are a composite of numerous types of vacancy. “Market Rate” vacancies are typically units for rent or for sale. A healthy “equilibrium” market vacancy rate is generally considered 5% for both ownership and rental markets.

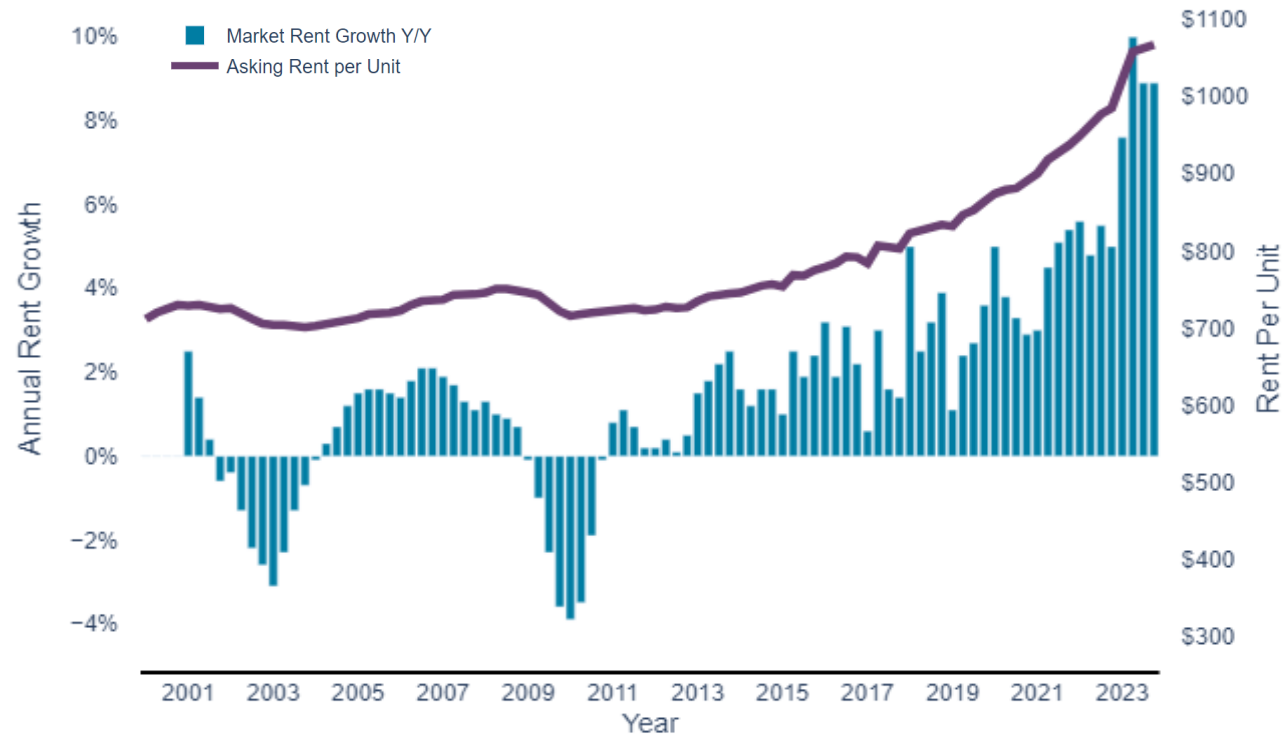
Below 5% vacancy, and inventory is constrained, putting upward pressure on prices. Landlords are also less inclined to improve properties. Sustained rates below 5% send market signals to invest in new development.

Above 5%, and landlords may have difficulty filling units, leading to lower or declining prices, and an incentive to increase the quality of units, in order to compete for tenants. Sustained high vacancies can lead to under- or dis-investment.

## Covid-19 shifted market demand

Rents trailed inflation during the 2010s. However, just prior to the recession, rents started to increase as the region added employment and the supply of housing in Mentor remained limited. Covid-19 drove a nationwide ‘flight’ to the suburbs. Increased demand drove strong upward year over year growth in rents, far outpacing the two decades prior.

### Multi-Family Rent Growth



#### A note on data triangulation:

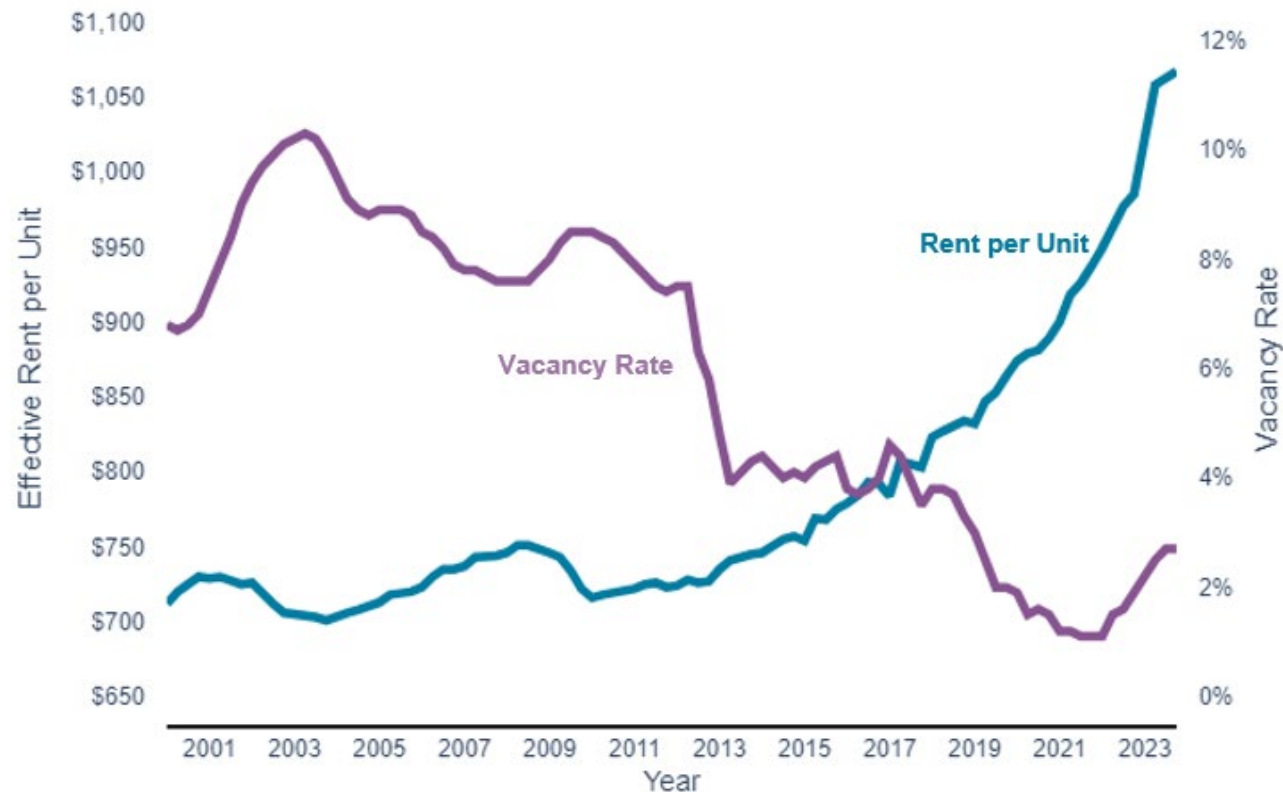
Costar is a comprehensive database of commercial properties. It tracks a range of housing market metrics and commercial descriptors. In the housing market, it is strongest at tracking larger multi-family, market rate rental buildings. It does not track single-family homes for rent, duplexes, triplexes, or smaller/older multi-family complexes. In Mentor, it fails to capture single-family homes, condominiums, or single-family homes for rent.

It is useful to triangulate data from Costar with other data sources to get a more comprehensive understanding of the market.

## Vacancy rates continue to drop but new supply remains constrained

Recovery from the Great Recession drove down vacancy rates to below 5% since 2013. Increased demand for suburban units during the pandemic brought vacancies to sub-2%, creating a strong environment for rent growth.

Multi-Family Rent Growth relative to Vacancy Rates

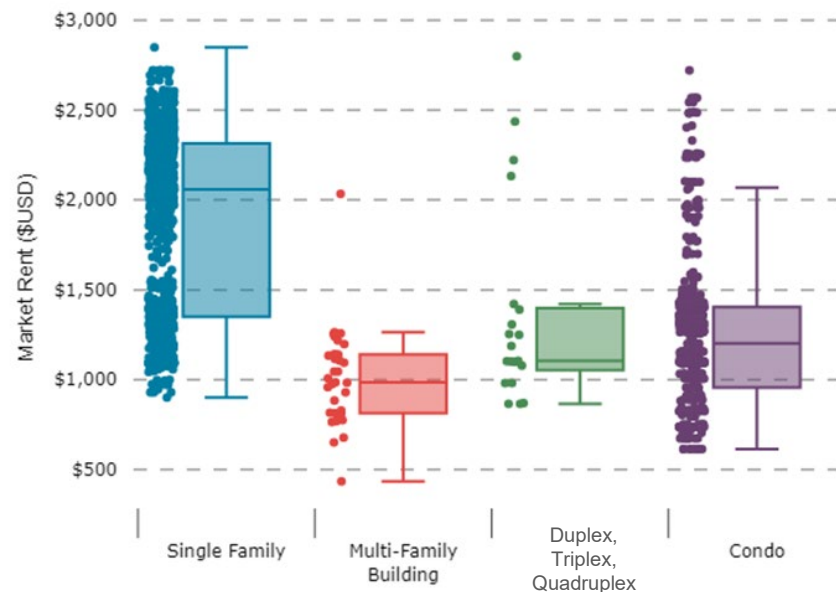


**Rental Demand Drivers:** Numerous factors are driving demand for rental housing, many of them long-term trends that will shape housing demand profiles for the foreseeable future. For younger households, higher levels of debt due to soaring costs of higher education have reduced savings. Many younger couples are also putting off children until later in life, reducing the need to ‘settle’ into a neighborhood more suited for raising a family. On the other end of the age spectrum, baby boomers (the second largest generation), are entering mid to late retirement years, with many downsizing to smaller single-story units or apartments that better meet housing needs. Meanwhile, new supply of single-family housing has disproportionately focused on upper-end housing rather than starter homes due to higher costs of construction, more stringent lending standards, and the loss of single-family home developers to bankruptcy in the Great Recession. Further compounding issues, mortgage rates increased in response to raising inflation in 2021, dampening demand for mortgages. *Renting is increasingly a better economic option for numerous households, and long-term planning oriented around meeting the needs of households must consider this dynamic.*

### Rents are highest for single-family homes and condos

Single family homes remain a desirable renting option, fetching a significant premium over the existing rental stock. Single-family rentals are increasingly common as many millennial households desire more space and access to good neighborhoods, but often lack the financial ability to purchase homes outright.

#### Rent by Building Type



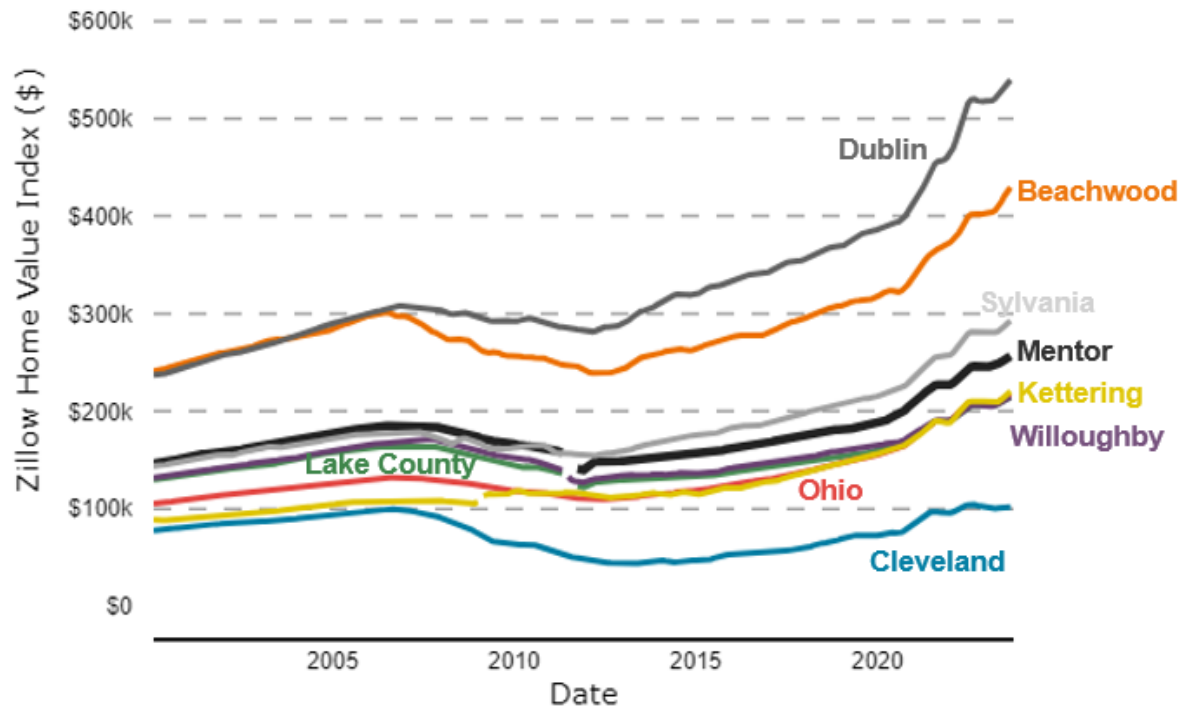
The market rate rental data on this page and the next are derived from Stantec’s rent prediction model. The rent prediction model is trained on existing market-rate rents. These rents are ‘scraped’ from a range of different online listing sites and joined to the assessor’s parcel dataset that contains descriptions of each property, including its age, living area, land area, assessed values, number of bedrooms, etc. The model incorporates building attributes and neighborhood attributes (zip code, median household income, etc.) to then predict rents. The result is an estimated or ground-truthed rent prediction for each property in Mentor.

Here they are aggregated by different attributes into box plots. A box plot visualizes distribution, with the bottom bar indicating the bottom range, the first bar of the box indicating the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, the middle line the median (or 50<sup>th</sup> percentile), the top of the box the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, and the top line the maximum values (outliers are excluded and visualized with the dot, with outliers being 3 standard deviations or more from the median value).

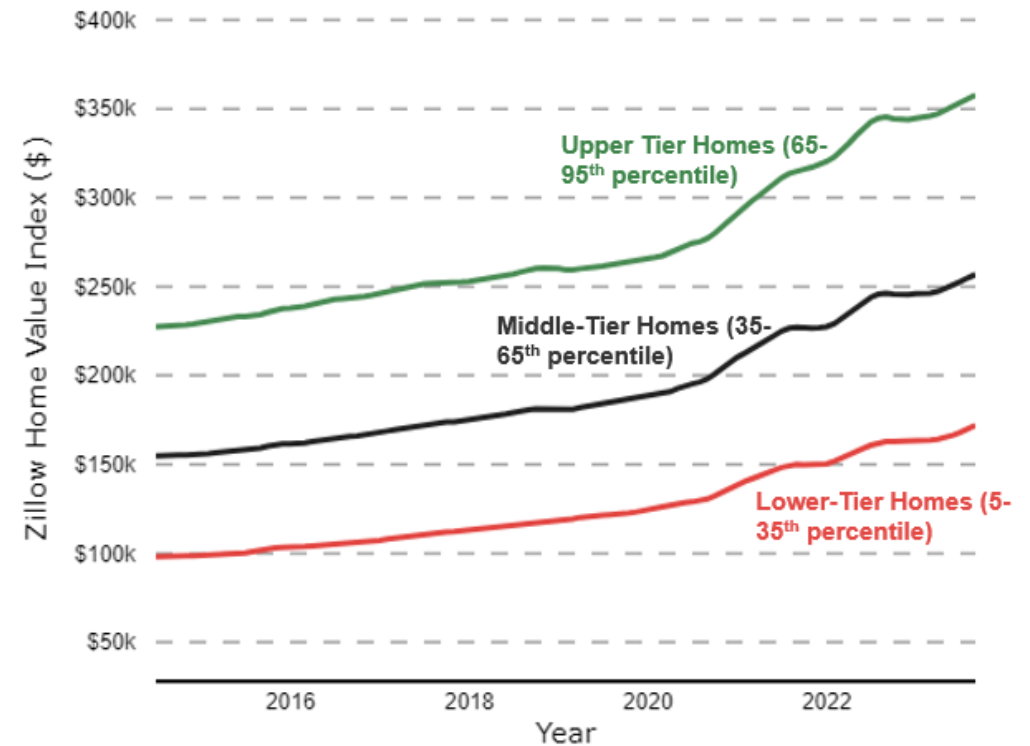
## Home values dropped following the Recession, but have since recovered

Mentor home prices dropped following the Great Recession but have since recovered. Upper-tier homes have been increasing at a slightly faster rate, indicating strong demand on the higher end of the ownership market. In 2024, the average Mentor home value is \$253,500, up from \$151,000 in 2015.

Zillow Home Value Index – Middle Market (35<sup>th</sup>-65<sup>th</sup> percentile)



Zillow Home Value Index in Mentor – By Tier



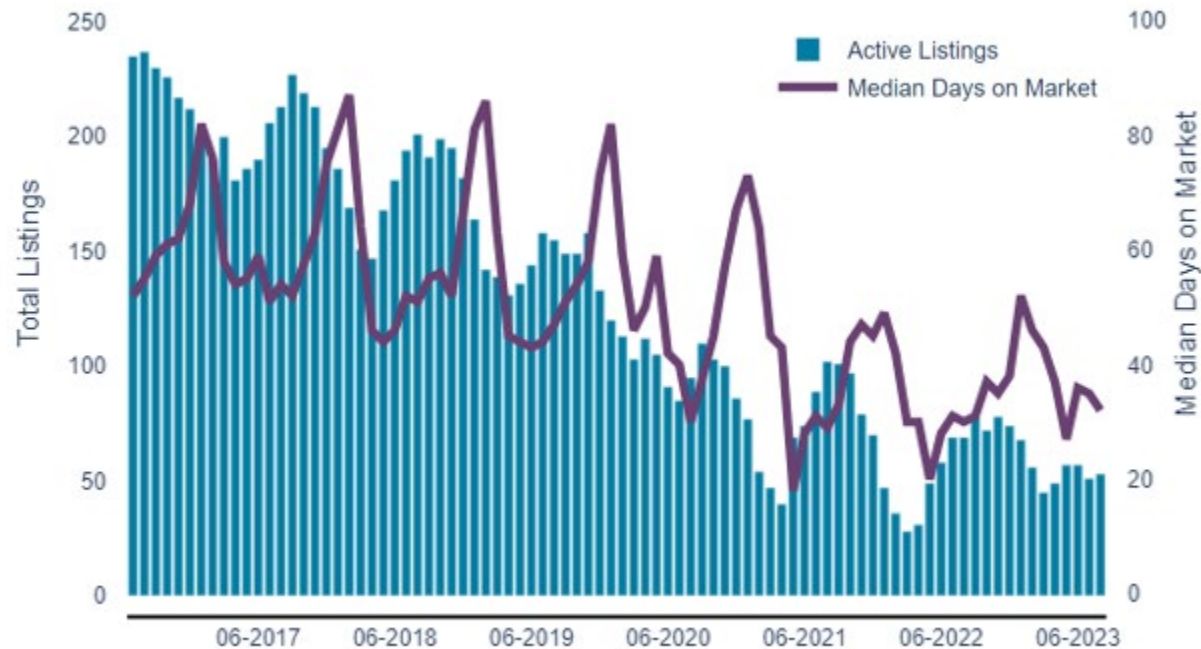
Source(s): Zillow, ZHVI Cuts by Metro, extracted 10/1/2023



## Inventory shrinks even as demand remains robust

Inventory – measured here by active listings, has stalled since the pandemic and the subsequent rise in mortgage rates. Simultaneously, units that do hit the market are being purchased quickly, often above listing price.

### For-Sale Housing Inventory



Housing inventory is subject to local and national drivers. Inventory may be high in times where job growth is low or negative. Households leaving the community are forced to sell. In a low demand market, houses will be on the market longer, and are more likely to adjust the sale price downward to ensure a sale.

National drivers include things like macroeconomic performance and interest rates. As interest rates spiked to tame inflation in 2021-2023, new inventory nationwide plummeted as households were reluctant to forsake mortgages secured at lower interest rates and to absorb significantly higher finance costs at higher rates. This dampened the impulse of sellers to move.

In Mentor, high demand for housing combined with limited inventory have driven home prices up.

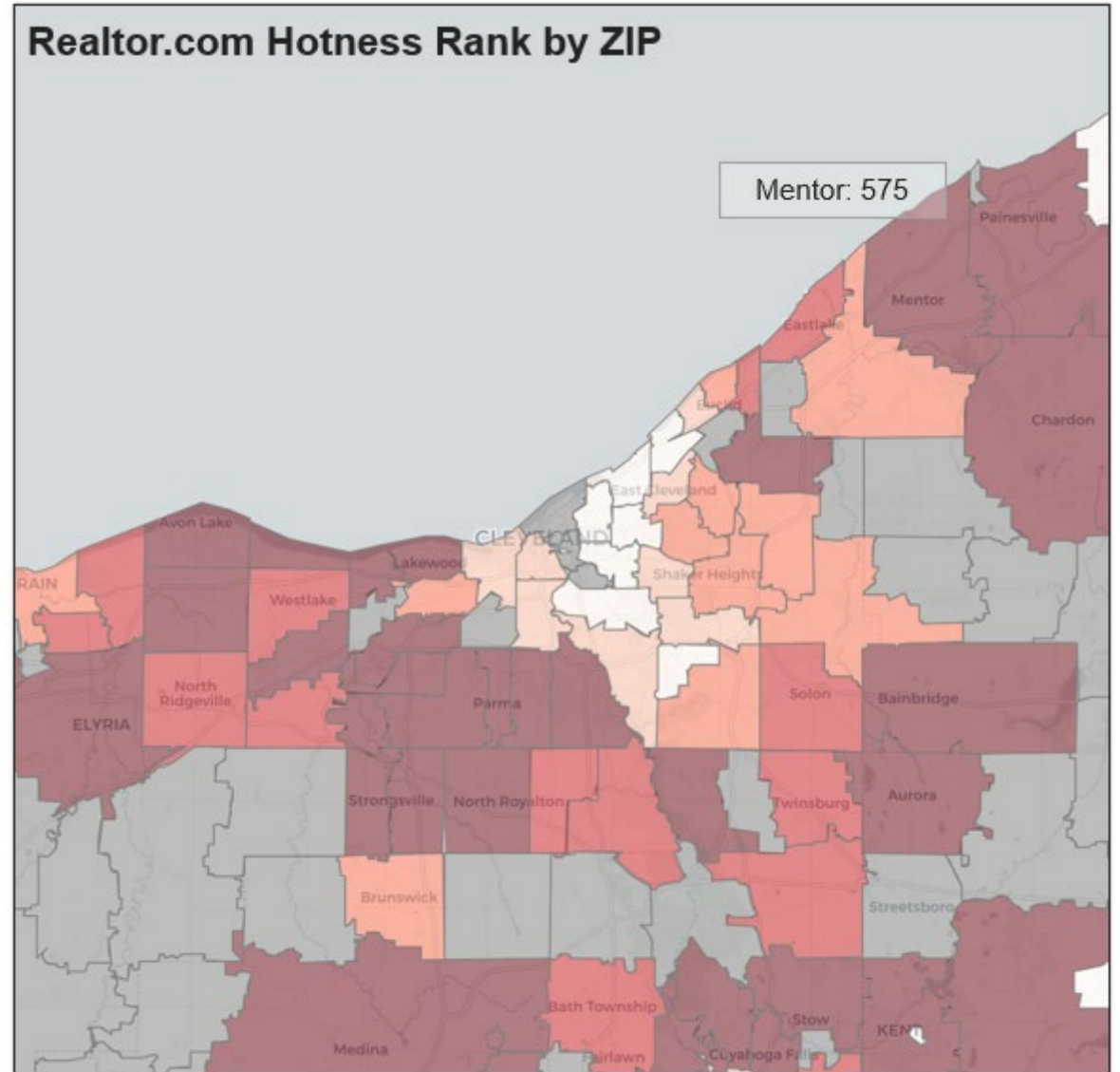
## Median Home Value

Mentor's relative affordability, limited supply, and few days on market have created a 'hot' single family real estate market. The "Hotness Rank" is a composite index created based on a range of statistics, including median days on market, number of online listing views, and sale price above asking. According to this ranking the Cleveland market is hot, as many people living in high housing cost areas nationwide eye more affordable housing options, especially in an era with more remote work options. Ordered by rank, Mentor's ZIP code 'Hotness Rank' is in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile of ranked zip codes nationwide in August, 2023. Out of major metros, Zillow ranked Cleveland as the 2<sup>nd</sup> hottest metro housing market in 2023.

Mentor's Hotness Rank Relative to Nationwide ZIP Code Rankings



Source(s): Realtor.com



**HOTNESS RANK (LOW NUMBERS ARE HOTTER MARKETS, REALTOR.COM AUGUST 2023)**



### Takeaways

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- 1. Strong Demand for Single-Family Homes:** Demand remains robust for single-family homes, with Mentor home values appreciating above heights witnessed prior to the housing crash. Inventory remains restricted due to high mortgage rates, but the homes that do enter the market are purchased quickly. Due to high rates of affordability, the Cleveland metro and Mentor are considered a nationally 'hot' property market.
- 2. Rents – on the whole – have underperformed.** The lack of new multi-family rental housing has dampened demand for Mentor's units relative to other suburban locations that have added newer housing. All new rentals are in single-family homes – an increasingly popular rental format for millennial's starting families and the demand for more space as work-from-home policies normalize. However, a range of factors have increased demand since 2021, leading to step year-over-year jumps in rents.
- 3. Market indicators show strong demand for a range of housing types:** Single-family homes remain highly desirable, but the boost in rents and low vacancy rates for existing apartments indicate strong demand for apartments. However, Mentor's rental and home value growth rates trail other suburban centers – especially those that have added new multi-family housing near mixed-use town centers (this is called suburban 'retrofitting' where suburbs historically based on sprawl and strict Euclidian zoning have instead sought to integrate more dense housing alongside retail, office, and recreational space). This aligns with national studies that indicate millennials have similar rates of suburbanization as previous generations, but the suburbs they prefer have higher density, more amenities, and a more dense, urban feel.



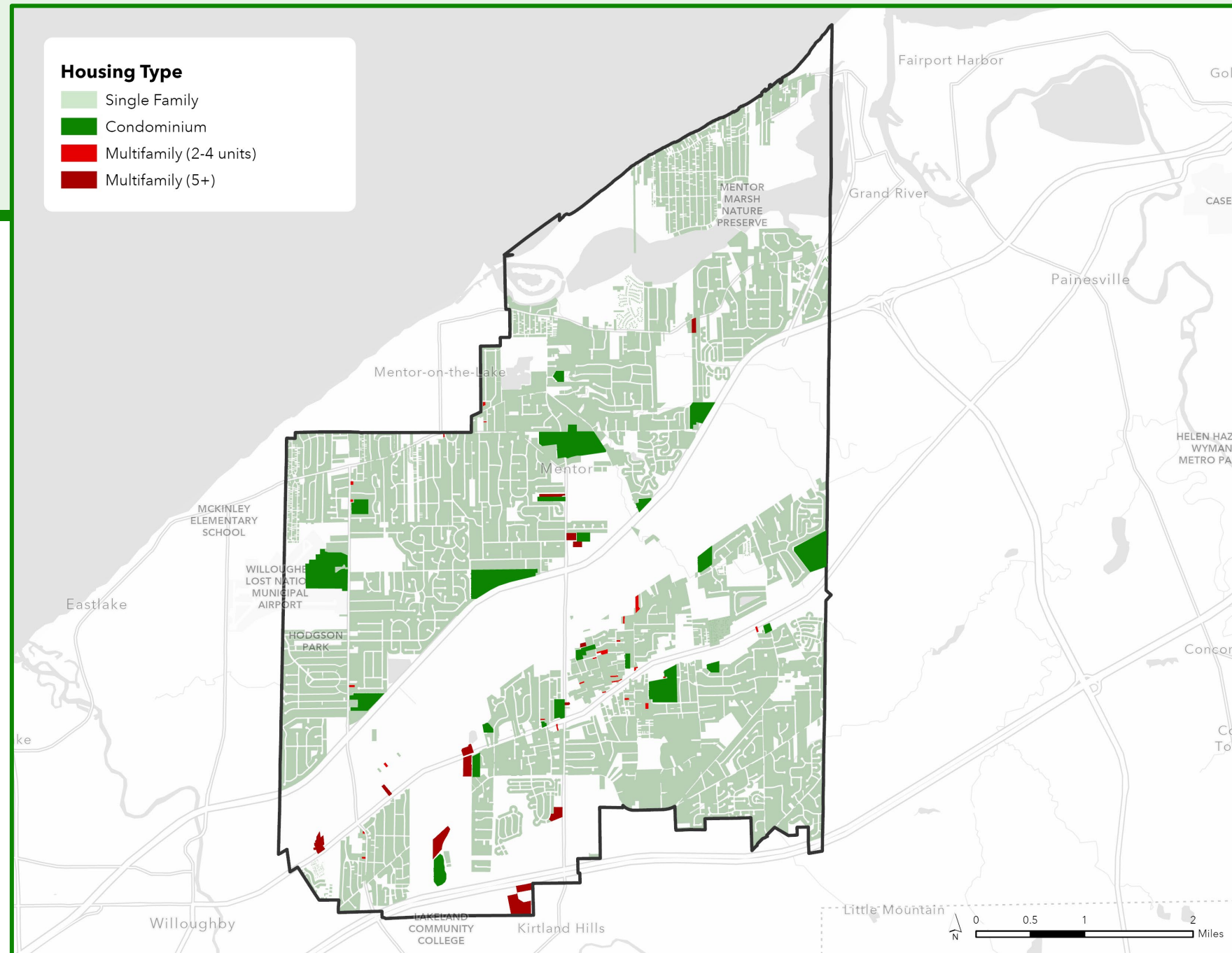
**05**  
**HOUSING**  
**INVENTORY**

# INVENTORY | BY TYPE

## Dwelling Types

Housing Type	Total Units	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied
Single Family	16,795	16,249	546
Multi-Family (2-4 Units)	62	5	57
Multi-Family (5+ Units)	1,262	0	1,262
Condominiums	2,993	2,697	296

Low-density single-family homes remain the most common form of development in Mentor. Multi-family buildings tend to be clustered near existing commercial districts, especially multi-family rental housing. The more historic centers contains a range of light-density housing types from eras where duplexes and triplexes were more common.

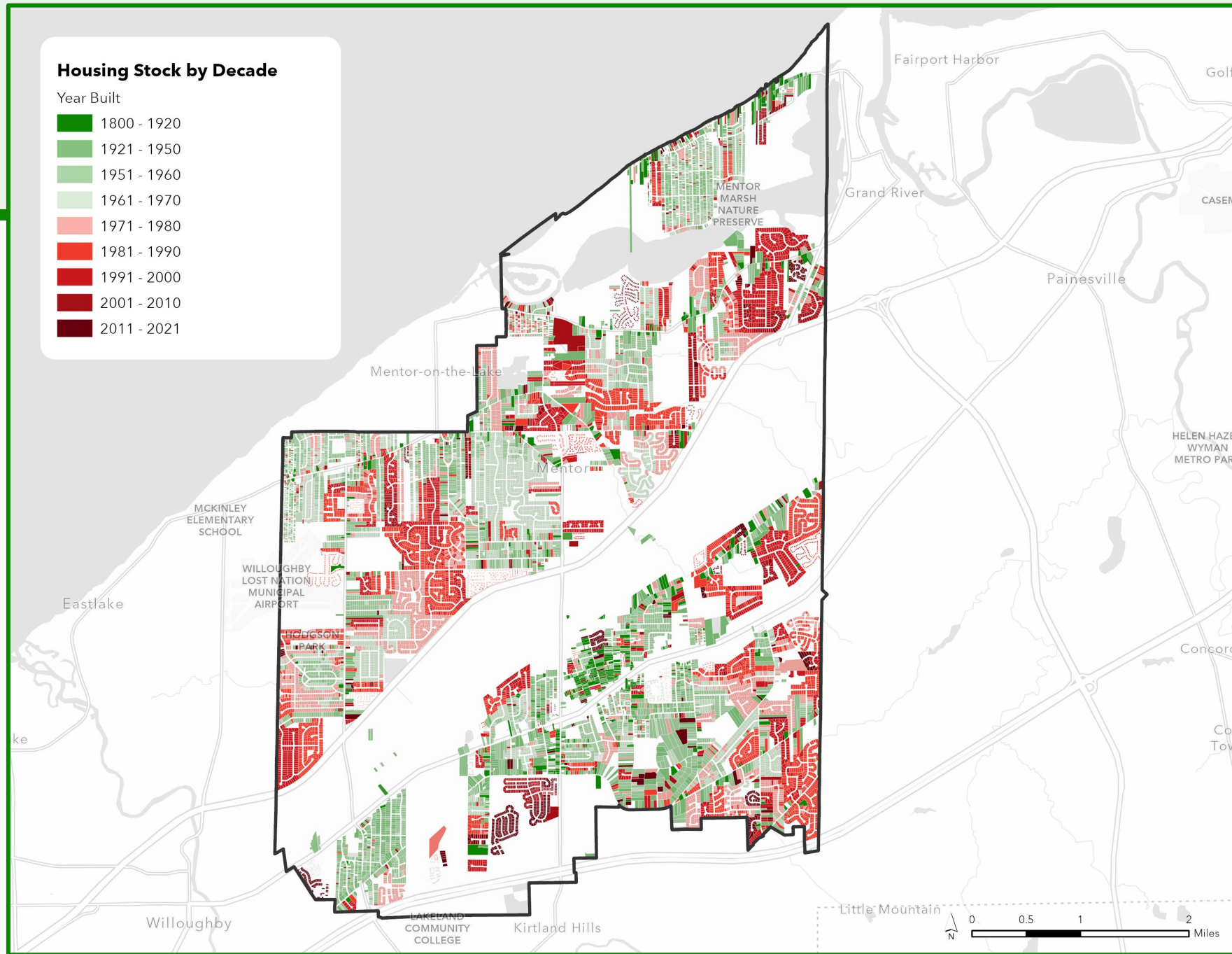


# Housing by Age

Mentor’s housing stock emerged in response to rail connecting Cleveland to Erie in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Older residential neighborhoods popped up without a significant historical town center. Development accelerated during the great wave of suburbanization following World War II, with Mentor developing a model of low-density single-family neighborhoods. Retail development expanded along main automobile arteries and in strictly zoned commercial districts, with the Great Lakes Mall serving as a *de facto* town center.

Since the 1970s, development has focused on single-family homes and some senior multi-family housing. The general character remains low-density suburban.

Year Built	Housing Units
1800-1920	427
1921-1950	1,572
1951-1960	3,522
1961-1970	4,040
1971-1980	3,990
1981-1990	3,265
1991-2000	1,975
2001-2010	949
2011-2022	844



# INVENTORY | BY VALUE

## Estimated Market Value

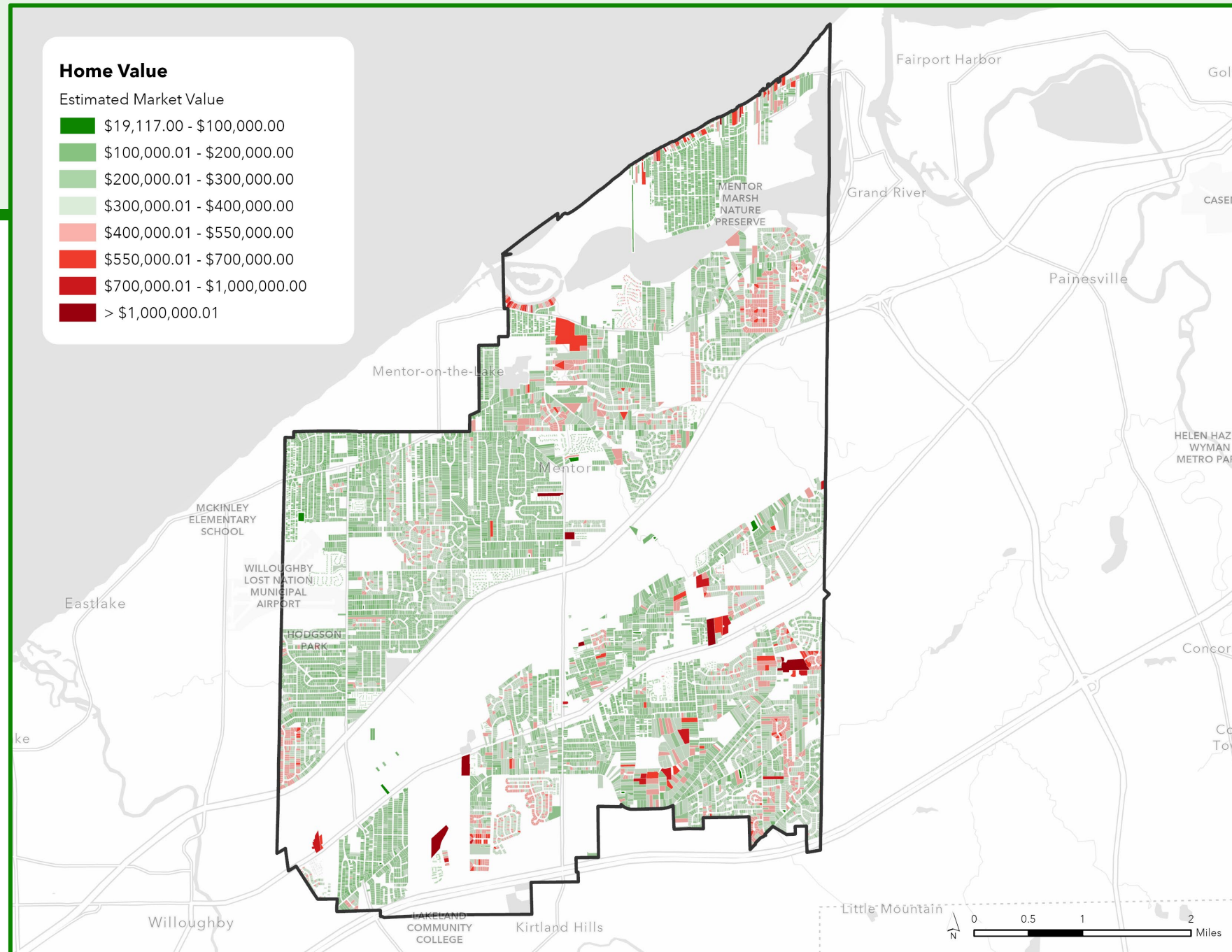
Mentor's home values are tightly correlated to age. Newer homes, especially those built since 2010, tend to be more expensive than the average older home.

Other trends exist, such as more expensive housing in larger lots in the southeast, and in neighborhoods closer to the Mentor Lagoons, Mentor Harbor, and homes directly on the lake. Proximity to environmental amenities also generates a premium, with homes near Veterans Park also increasing in value.

More affordable homes are located in the northeast where the homes are significantly smaller and older. This also correlates to areas where housing turnover is highest, and more younger families are entering the community.

Income Bracket	Housing Units
<\$100,000	487
\$100,001-\$200,000	5,201
\$200,001-\$300,000	7,735
\$300,001-\$400,000	4,976
\$400,001-\$550,000	1,299
\$550,001-\$700,000	93
\$700,001-\$1,000,000	17
>\$1,000,001	21

\*Multi-family apartments not included

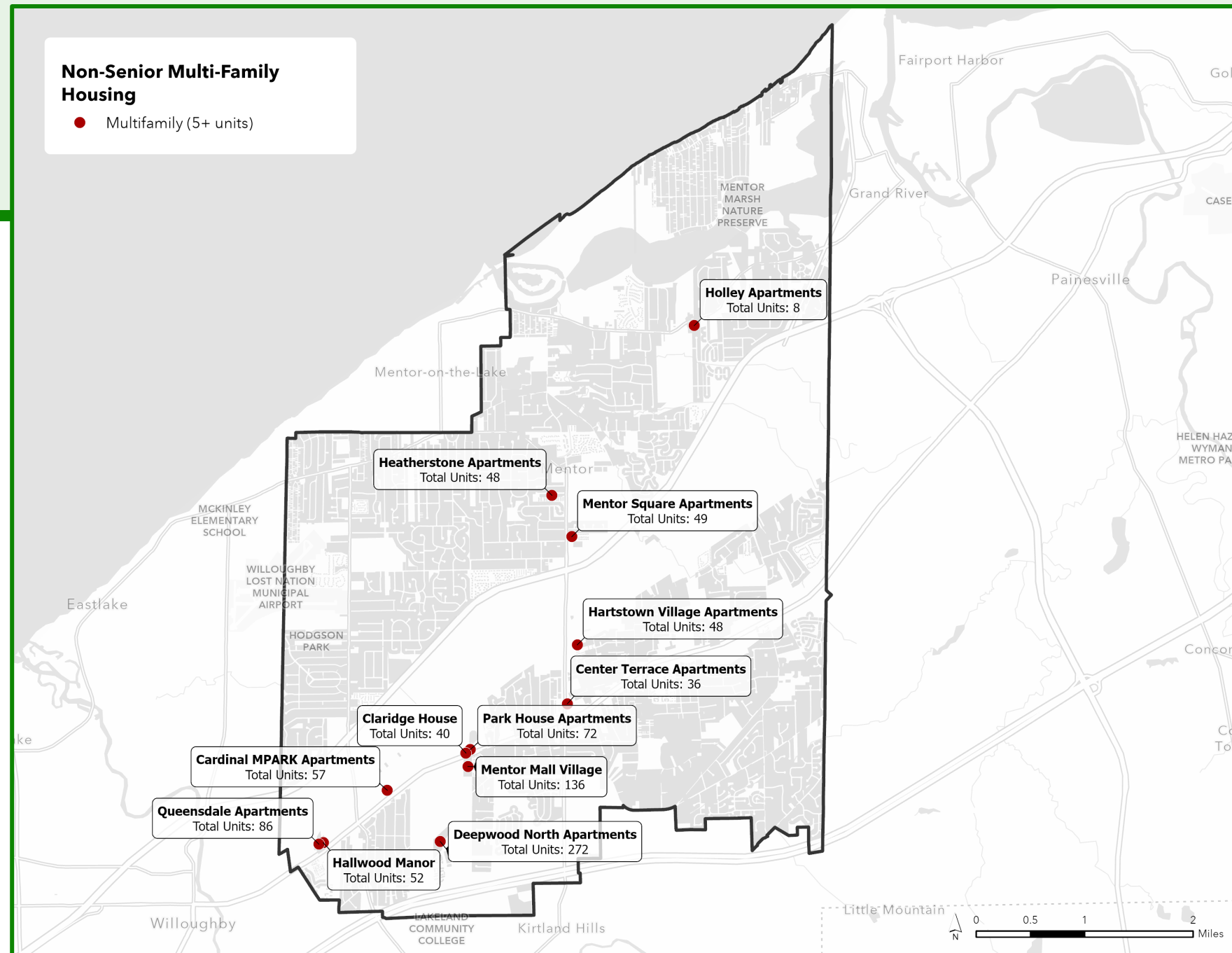


## Multi-Family Rentals

Most built between 1950-1970, multi-family units are concentrated near commercially zoned areas, showing strict land use separation from single-family neighborhoods. The average year built of Mentor multi-family units is 1956, indicating the extent to which multi-family housing in the community is dated relative to more contemporary options elsewhere in the metro.

While density does support existing commercial, the rental stock is largely suburban in nature, meaning that rental buildings are largely lower density mid-rise or garden style apartments built around shared amenities, but lacking organic connection to other community-based amenities.

However, the existing housing stock does tend to be affordable, offering housing at prices affordable for many households earning workforce incomes. All qualify as “Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing,” a term that refers to non-subsidized housing units that are affordable to those earning 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).





## INVENTORY | NATURALLY OCCURRING AFFORDABLE HOUSING (NOAH)

Property	Address	Total Units	Studios	Studio Rent	1 Bedrooms	1 Bed Rent	2 Bedrooms	2 Beds Rent	3 Bedrooms	3 Beds Rent	N.O.A.H.	Costar Rank
Cardinal MPARK Apartments	7559 Mentor Ave	57	2	\$787	33	\$888	22	\$1,014			Yes	***
Center Terrace Apartments	7423-7433 Center St	22	2	\$653	20	\$818					Yes	**
Claridge House	7921 Mentor Ave	40			10	\$822	20	\$1,054	10	\$1,268	Yes	**
Deepwood North Apartments	8100 Deepwood Blvd	272			88	\$1,111	184	\$1,266			Yes	**
Hallwood Manor	7205 Mentor Ave	55			26	\$780	29	\$771			Yes	**
Cottonwood Lane	7155 Hart St	48					36	\$930	12	\$1,137	Yes	**
Heatherstone Apartments	6400 Center St	48			12	\$814	24	\$986	12	\$1,145	Yes	**
Holley Apartments	9010 Lake Shore Blvd	8					4				Yes	**
Mentor Mall Village	7950 Mentor Ave	136			15	\$831	93	\$978	28	\$1,202	Yes	**
Mentor Square Apartments	6615 Center St	49			31	\$766	18	\$961			Yes	**
Park House Apartments	7945-7947 Mentor Ave	72			20	\$1,050	52	\$1,101			Yes	**
Piazza Square Apartments	9324 Mentor Ave	4			4	\$900					Yes	-
Queensdale Apartments	7191 Mentor Ave	86			2	\$685	48	\$995	36	\$1,250	Yes	***
Heritage Apartments	7853/7855 Brentwood Rd	4			4	\$850					Yes	-
Helman Properties	7123 Mentor Ave	7			7	\$915					Yes	-
Tyler Apartments	7512 Tyler Blvd	4			4	\$900					Yes	-
Vayo Apartments	8364 Mentor Ave	6					6	\$1,140			Yes	***
<i>Totals &amp; Averages</i>		918	4	\$720	276	\$866	536	\$1,018	98	\$1,200	units: 918	

\*NOAH Units are defined here as rental units affordable to incomes at 60% AMI or below. For the Cleveland Metro where AMI is \$94,000, an affordable monthly rent would be \$1,410 or below.

\*\* Costar Rank is a 1-5 Star ranking of building quality, combing an assessment of outdoor and indoor features plus renovations.

Mentor's multi-family housing stock is dated but still functional. The majority of older buildings have a CoStar rank of 2 stars out of 5, with a few renovated buildings adding an additional star. One- and two-bedroom units are most common, with \$866 the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,018 for a two-bedroom units. Garden-style developments with surface parking is the main housing typology.

All buildings qualify as containing Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing units, or units affordable for those earning 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Using the Cleveland-Elyria MSA HUD limits, this means one-bedroom units must be below \$1,266, two beds at \$1,446, and three bedrooms at \$1,627.

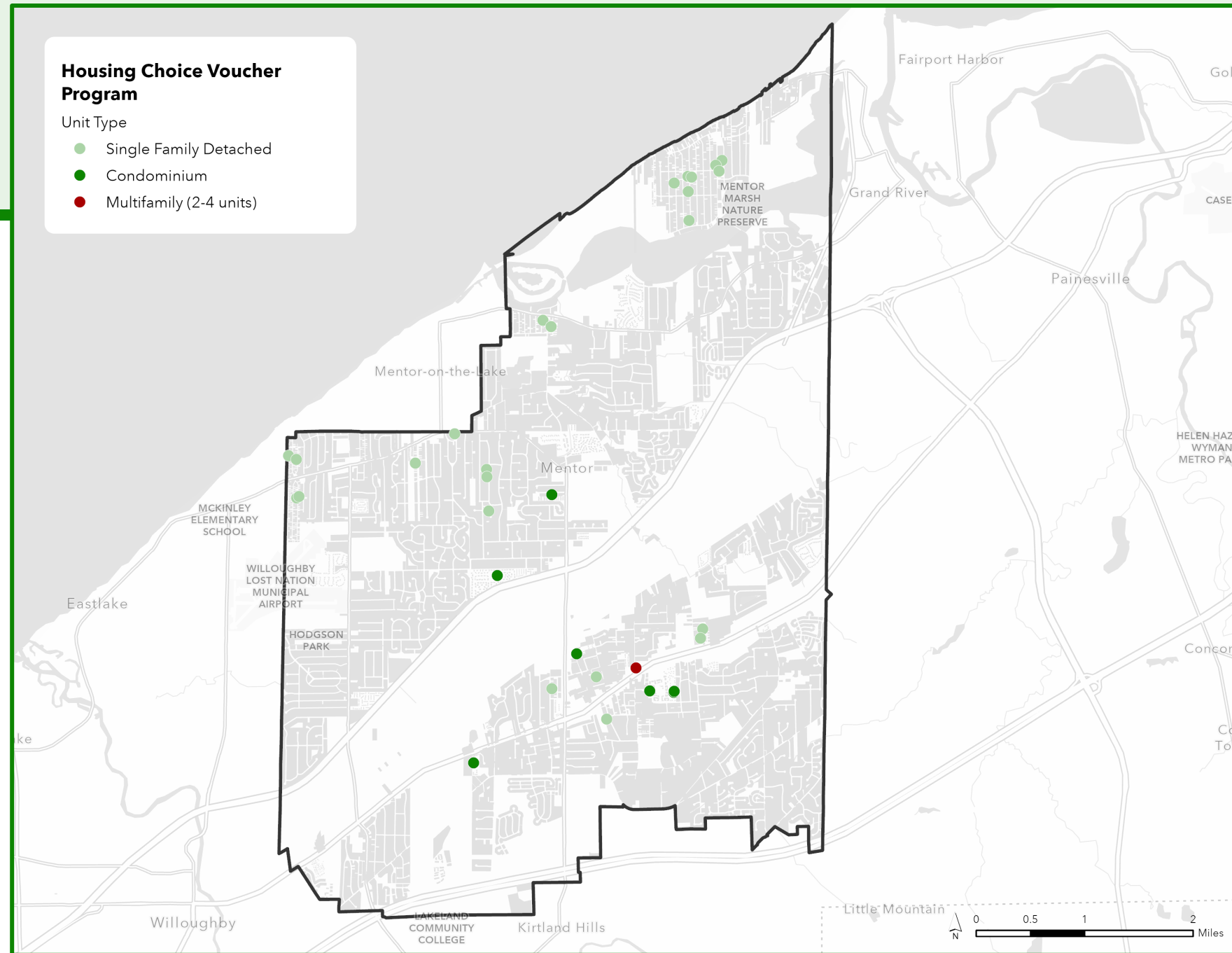
# INVENTORY | BY TYPE

## Affordable Housing

Housing Type	Total Units
Single Family Detached	24
Condominium	7
Duplex	2

Mentor's lacks publicly subsidized affordable housing units. The 33 Housing Choice Voucher Program (section 8) units that set rents based on income are distributed in single family homes, duplexes, and condominiums across the region.

Mentor does not have Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC, pronounced *li-tec*) funded apartments, although the city is in the broader administrative area. LIHTC units exchange tax credits for a proportion of units set at rent levels affordable to households at 50-60% of an Area's Median Income. They can be restricted to households with disabilities, for senior households, or for the general market, and can exist as stand alone projects or as part of a mixed-income development.



# INVENTORY | BY TYPE

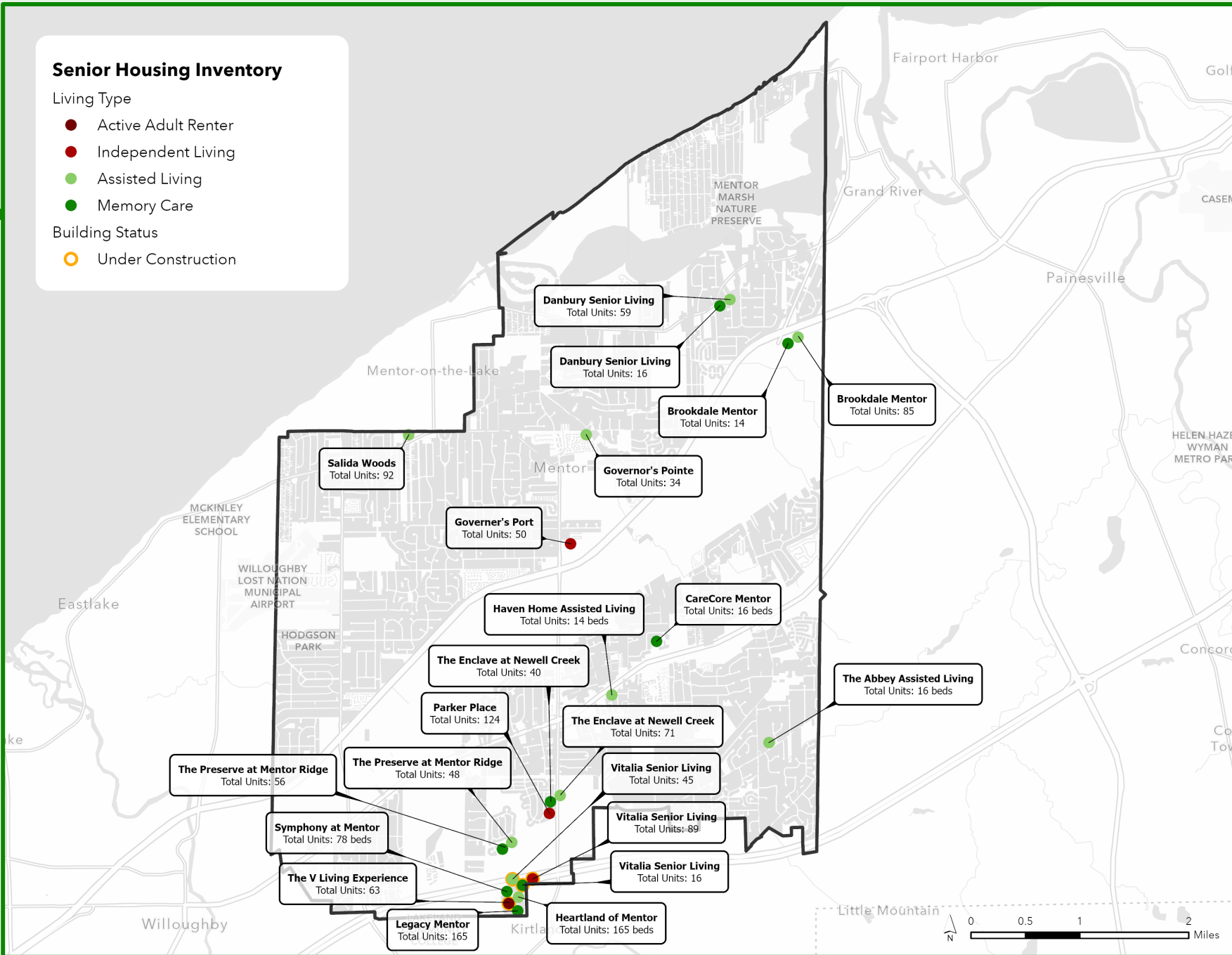
## Senior Housing Inventory

Active Adult: Renter		
The V Living Experience: Villas	Multiple Addresses	63
	<i>total</i>	63

Independent Living		
Vitalia Senior Living	8180 Mentor Way	89
Governor's Port	8460 Westport Drive	50
Parker Place	7960 Center St	124
	<i>total</i>	263

Assisted Living		
Vitalia Senior Living	8180 Mentor Hills Dr	45
The Abbey Assisted Living	9415 Johnnycake Ridge Rd	16
Brookdale Mentor	5700 Emerald Court	85
Danbury Senior Living	9150 Lake Shore Blvd	59
The Enclave at Newell Creek	7900 Center Street	71
Governor's Pointe	8506 Hendricks Road	34
Haven Home Assisted Living	7395 Rockingham Road	14
Salida Woods by New Perspective	7685 Lakeshore Blvd	92
The Preserve at Mentor Ridge	8161 Norton Parkway	48
	<i>total</i>	464

Memory Care		
Vitalia Senior Living	8190 Mentor Hills Dr.	16
Symphony at Mentor	8155 Mentor Hills Dr.	78
Brookdale Mentor	5700 Emerald Court	14
CareCore Mentor	8881 Schaefer Street	16
Danbury Senior Living	9150 Lakeshore Blvd	16
The Enclave at Newell Creek	7900 Center Street	40
The Preserve at Mentor Ridge	8161 Norton Parkway	56
	<i>total</i>	236



1. **Single family homes dominate.** Mentor's housing market lacks a diverse range of home types, with single-family detached homes by far the most dominant housing type.
2. **Rental units are affordable, but are old and limited.** Mentor's multi-family housing stock is affordable for those earning workforce incomes, but the housing stock is often dated. It lacks the amenities, design, and orientation to community-based amenities often desired by renters. The number of affordable units is also limited relative to existing demand
3. **Single-Family homes range in value, with newer homes at the higher end.** Home values vary strongly based on year-built, with newer homes often targeting the upper-middle end of the housing market. Older homes provide more affordable entry-points into the market.
4. **Lacking a suburban center.** Many suburbs have sought to cultivate higher density housing oriented around a central location, seeking to add more place-based character to neighborhoods developed historically around sprawl. Mentor currently lacks a 'center,' with more dense developments extending along the commercial corridors of the city.
5. **Senior Housing inventory is growing, but mostly in the assisted living and nursing care categories:** New senior communities are emerging in areas with developable land in the southern portions of Mentor. This housing type is emerging due to high demand for senior-specific housing types and communities to meet the needs of an aging community.



12

**06**  
**GAP**  
**ANALYSIS**

## Real-time supply side analysis with machine learning

A parcel-level inventory of all housing units within the region incorporates Census data, rental data from CoStar, real-time cost information from web-scraping algorithms, and other sources, to establish a predictive technique to assign monthly cost attributes to each unit using statistical regression and related methods. The model incorporates HUD data on public and subsidized unit totals, costs, and bedroom counts at the county level.

### 1) Parcel Data from the Warren Group & Lake County

The Warren Group is a national data provider of parcel data that includes detailed data on tax assessed parcels. The Warren Group data was combined with Lake County parcel data that contained additional supporting data on individual parcels. Parcel data contains information on the location, year built, homestead status, assessed value, number of bedrooms, bathrooms, and total rooms, condition and the property use type of each parcel. Many are missing attributes. Completed entries then train Machine Learning (ML) models to predict and fill missing data. Staff ground-truth this data with existing housing surveys such as the American Community Survey, ensuring the estimates for bedroom size, unit counts, and building types reflect existing data.

### 2) Real-Time Data from Leading Sources

CoStar: Aggregates data on multi-family rental buildings, including its class, intended market, condition, number of units by size, and rent for units at each size.

Apartments.com: We scrape rental data from Apartments.com listings, which can include both large multi-family buildings with real-time prices, and single-family homes, condos, or other units posted

Padmapper: Scraped rental data from Padmapper.com. Padmapper combines rental postings from a variety of sources,

including smaller rental buildings like homes, condos, duplexes and triplexes in addition to large multi-family units.

City of Mentor: Data on tenancy was prioritized from Mentor's internal housing assessment that determines whether a home, plex unit, condominium, or townhouse is rented or owner-occupied. This complements other data for approximating tenure such as homestead status. City data incorporated into the model also includes housing type, whether the property was converted from single-family into a multi-tenant property, and the number of units available.

### 3) Real-Time rent with parcel information

This combination creates a database of specific parcels and the rent and a 'training' dataset for statistical ML models. Stantec uses 20+ variables to help predict rent such as location, median rent for apartments by size in each block group in which the parcel is located, living area per unit, age, condition, bedrooms, bathrooms, assessed value per unit, etc.

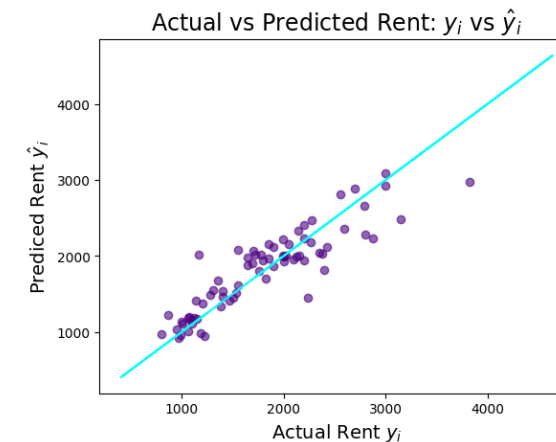
Stantec checks predictions in a 'test' dataset – or 20% of the train dataset set aside – to assess the performance of the best ML model. The model then predicts market rents for all properties designated as 'rental' in the region. A similar model is developed and applied by the Warren group to determine the market value of condominiums and homes.

This dataset gives a detailed breakdown of all units in a region by

building type, tenure, bedroom unit count, and type, as well as the rest of the building attributes. Using the estimated monthly housing cost to afford the unit, we get a specific breakdown of the cost to own or rent.

### 4) Aggregate and Analyze

This dataset enables us to aggregate data that helps contextualize supply and demand together. Stantec visualizes and analyzes data based on cost, location, year built, and development type.



*Example regression analysis comparing Stantec's predicted to ground-truthed rent for parcels*

# Housing gap analysis is informed by supply, preferences, and production

### Current need

Housing preferences are derived by analyzing the housing choices made by households who moved within the last 12 months per the most recent census (in this case, 2021 Census ACS). By isolating just these recent movers, the analysis can model housing market decisions typical households of various incomes and sizes are making in the present market based on their current needs and ability to pay. This is referred to as the market's "current preferences."

The current preferences model is a 'demand curve', incorporating the kinds of units that households of different sizes and income levels choose to acquire. The model creates a 'weight' that determines the odds of each household at a given number of persons and income choosing a house of a particular size. For example, in the case of a household with a high income but only 2 persons in the house, chances are higher that this household owns and occupies a unit larger than their strict need. However, there are many

people that still choose to rent a one bedroom. The model would assign a low probability for the renting a one bedroom and a higher probability for owning a three bedroom.

The cost of housing is determined based on the 'max affordability level,' or the amount that a household earning a certain income could pay and to still have that unit be considered affordable. Maximum housing cost is capped at 30% in this analysis.

### Identifying the gap

Comparing the current distribution of preferences against the housing supply reveals how well aligned (or how misaligned) these two sides of the market are at each income level, tenure, and unit size. Shortages occur when there are more households preferring a given unit profile (cost, tenure, size) than there are such units available within the geography. Surpluses occur when there are more of a given unit profile than there are households who would prefer it.

The results of this analysis should be considered indicative of potential future shifts in settlement

patterns and not necessarily predictive of where or when households might actively change units. There are numerous personal reasons a household might choose to move or remain in a given year. Also, even if they did choose to move, a unit matching their exact preference might not be available.

Affordability gaps are evident as shortages among the lowest cost units. Because the households included in this analysis are currently housed within the same geography, it can be assumed many at corresponding income levels are currently cost burdened for lack of affordable options.

## Mentor Housing Demand

The table shows the housing demand for Mentor’s population as a function of their income, tenure (whether they rent or own), and desired unit size, based on the choices of the existing population.

This gap analysis assumes that every household in Mentor would be paying market-rate prices relative to their household incomes. In practice, most homeowners pay significantly less than market rates due to mortgages locked in at lower prices and at lower home values. On the other hand, due to high turnover, most rental households will be paying market rents.

This analysis indicates that gaps are highest in the lower-middle income brackets, where more demand exists relative to the supply of attainable housing units. Accordingly, there are more housing units at higher prices than there are households who would be able to attain houses at that current price. Rising unaffordability relates to a *general undersupply* of housing that drives housing prices up and relatively high mortgage rates that increase ownership costs relative to market values.

**Housing supply and demand by income spectrum**

Household Income Bracket	Max Monthly Rent	Max Home Price	Existing Household Demand		Existing Housing Supply	
			Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Less than \$15,000	\$375	\$29,000	127	0.6%	269	1.3%
\$15,000-24,999	\$625	\$48,320	75	0.4%	79	0.4%
\$25,000-34,999	\$875	\$67,650	430	2.0%	222	1.1%
\$35,000-49,999	\$1,250	\$96,650	1253	6.0%	799	3.8%
\$50,000-74,999	\$1,875	\$144,965	2375	11.3%	2246	10.7%
\$75,000-99,999	\$2,500	\$193,287	3046	14.5%	2695	12.8%
\$100,000-149,999	\$3,750	\$289,930	6418	30.5%	7060	33.6%
\$150,000-199,999	\$5,000	\$386,575	4766	22.7%	4983	23.7%
\$200,000 or more	<i>more</i>	<i>more</i>	2551	12.1%	2688	12.8%



## Mentor Housing Demand: 5-Year estimates

Lower income households are most likely to rent, with bedroom demand also a function of both income and household size. Conversely, higher income households are far more likely to own a home, again with the house size a function of both household size and income.

This model uses the behavior of households in the ownership and rental market based on ACS estimates for 2017-2021 in the Great Lakes census region.

The model calculates how different household sizes at different income thresholds behaved in the housing market when they moved in 2021. For example, smaller households in the income bracket are more likely to own rather than rent, and own/rent larger units than they would at lower incomes. Or, for another example, mid-sized families in middle incomes prefer to own larger homes, however many may be forced to accept smaller sized homes due to income restrictions, with an even smaller proportion renting.

The demand profile here demonstrates demand for rental units among lower-income households in predominantly 1-2 bedroom units, and as incomes increase, demand is higher for ownership product in larger units.

**Housing Demand by Price, Tenure, and Unit Size with Regional Preferences**

Household Income Required	Max Monthly Housing Cost	Rent				Own			
		1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+
Less than \$15000	\$375	253	139	35	17	50	212	237	106
\$15,000-24,999	\$625	185	139	43	24	41	277	408	127
\$25,000-34,999	\$875	135	169	72	13	55	330	509	177
\$35,000-49,999	\$1,250	189	307	180	34	54	482	808	287
\$50,000-74,999	\$1,875	232	446	224	61	75	524	1,159	606
\$75,000-99,999	\$2,500	69	137	101	48	62	456	1,449	895
\$100,000-149,999	\$3,750	35	108	76	21	18	450	1,825	1,712
\$150,000-199,999	\$5,000	0	2	6	2	14	105	525	770
\$200,000 or more	--	9	7	6	1	9	59	396	948

Source(s): ACS, regional PUMS preference

## Mentor Housing Demand: Household Demand by Household Need

This table demonstrates the extent of ‘over-housing’ in the Mentor community. If bedroom demand was determined by household size and structure rather than market forces, Mentor households would be housed in significantly smaller units.

This model uses household size and structure to determine units. The breakdown includes:

1. 1 bedroom for a married couple,
2. 1 bedroom for each additional adult,
3. 1 bedroom for 1 or 2 kids below age 12, and an additional bedroom for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> child,
4. 1 bedroom for teenaged children.

Given the high rate of empty-nesters, this model estimates that housing need is significantly different than preference, with many households ‘needing’ 1 or 2 bedroom rather than 3-4 bedroom units. Interestingly, the demand profile for renters indicates *more* need for larger units than exist on the market.

**Housing Demand by Price, Tenure, and Unit Size by**

Household Income Required	Max Monthly Housing Cost	Rent				Own			
		1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+
Less than \$15000	\$375	372	64	7	1	527	69	9	0
\$15,000-24,999	\$625	291	61	39	0	664	155	34	0
\$25,000-34,999	\$875	235	55	92	7	929	123	18	1
\$35,000-49,999	\$1,250	385	208	78	39	1,353	220	48	10
\$50,000-74,999	\$1,875	528	264	64	107	1,586	535	161	82
\$75,000-99,999	\$2,500	201	50	60	44	1,609	879	300	74
\$100,000-149,999	\$3,750	87	99	49	5	1,783	1,382	677	163
\$150,000-199,999	\$5,000	0	3	6	1	728	454	206	26
\$200,000 or more	--	18	3	2	0	582	581	170	79

## Mentor Housing Supply

Housing supply is concentrated in homes affordable to households earning \$100,000-200,000. Housing supply is also concentrated in 3-4 bedroom ownership units. In the rental market, multi-family rentals cluster in ranges affordable to households earning \$25,000-\$50,000, with single family rental homes making up the more expensive and larger units.

Housing supply is determined using parcel-level data. A detailed statistical analysis determines the total number of housing units currently occupied by renters and owners in the region.

### Rental

Real-time rent data, captured from live web postings, is incorporated into a statistical model to predict rents for all rented housing units in the region. Current home values are estimated through a statistical modeling process based on recent sale comps and parcel specific information.

### Ownership

Monthly housing costs for ownership housing reflects monthly payments on 30-year mortgages with a 10% down payment and 6.54% interest rate (regional average: December, 2023). Estimated property taxes and insurance payments are added at the standard mill rate for Mentor city. This yields estimated monthly costs associated with the purchase of an ownership property, which is distinct from what the existing homeowner is currently paying.

**Housing Supply: Units categorized by tenure, size, and monthly cost**

Household Income Required	Max Monthly Housing Cost	Rent				Own			
		1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+
Less than \$15,000	\$375	0	10	18	3	7	111	15	0
\$15,000-24,999	\$625	0	14	0	0	1	37	17	1
\$25,000-34,999	\$875	133	116	2	0	0	28	12	2
\$35,000-49,999	\$1,250	163	576	122	2	12	62	12	0
\$50,000-74,999	\$1,875	1	330	276	38	23	798	765	50
\$75,000-99,999	\$2,500	53	83	377	98	10	542	1,547	139
\$100,000-149,999	\$3,750	24	12	42	12	13	646	4,876	1,235
\$150,000-199,999	\$5,000	133	80	0	0	2	119	2,138	2,452
\$200,000 or more	--	0	0	59	0	3	131	861	1,597

Source(s): Woods & Poole, Replica, ACS, CoStar, Apartments.com, Padmapper

## Housing gap using the ACS 5-Year estimate

This table compares the housing supply to the housing demand to quantify the housing gaps at each income level, tenure and unit size. It demonstrates more supply at the upper end and significant gaps for deeply affordable rental units and moderately affordable ownership units.

### Gap Methodology

The housing gap combines the units at different bedroom sizes and housing tenure demanded at affordable price points and the total units supplied for renters and owners at market prices. The product is either a housing surplus or deficit for units at price points and bedroom size that captures where housing demand is not meeting current housing supply, or where housing supply currently exceeds housing demand.

### Gap Snapshot Results

- Mentor’s housing has become more unaffordable due to high interest rates and raising prices, putting it out of reach of what many households could afford today.
- Mentor’s single-family homes tend to rent above \$1,875. While these do have high occupancy, this analysis estimates that the supply of houses at this level is higher than the estimated number of households at that income level who choose to rent who could afford those units. Accordingly, households here would ‘pay up’ for more space.

### Gap Analysis: Percent of units categorized by tenure, size, and monthly cost

Household Income Required	Max Monthly Housing Cost	Rent				Own			
		1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+
Less than \$15000	\$375	-253	-129	-17	-14	-43	-101	-222	-106
\$15,000-24,999	\$625	-185	-125	-43	-24	-40	-240	-391	-126
\$25,000-34,999	\$875	-2	-53	-70	-13	-55	-302	-497	-175
\$35,000-49,999	\$1,250	-26	269	-58	-32	-42	-420	-796	-287
\$50,000-74,999	\$1,875	-231	-116	52	-23	-52	274	-394	-556
\$75,000-99,999	\$2,500	-16	-54	276	50	-52	86	98	-756
\$100,000-149,999	\$3,750	-11	-96	-34	-9	-5	196	3,051	-477
\$150,000-199,999	\$5,000	133	78	-6	-2	-12	14	1,613	1,682
\$200,000 or more	--	-9	-7	53	-1	-6	72	465	649



## Housing Gap Using Housing Need as the Demand Table

The extent of ‘over-housing’ is clear when comparing the demand table determined by household need and structure and the current supply of housing

When the gap is calculated using the minimum bedroom demand model, the oversupply of large housing units relative to actual household size and incomes is stark.

This indicates strong latent demand for 1-2 bedroom single-level senior housing product rather than multi-story, larger bedroom homes. It may also signal short to mid-term difficulties with property maintenance as older households struggle to maintain larger houses.

Since the demand table is based on the current population, it does not capture the potential demand outside the market area – such as families with children – who may prefer existing larger housing stock more appropriate for families.

Gap Analysis: Percent of units categorized by tenure, size, and monthly cost

Household Income Required	Max Monthly Housing Cost	Rent				Own			
		1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+
Less than \$15000	\$375	-372	-54	11	2	-520	42	6	0
\$15,000-24,999	\$625	-291	-47	-39	0	-663	-118	-17	1
\$25,000-34,999	\$875	-102	61	-90	-7	-929	-95	-6	1
\$35,000-49,999	\$1,250	-222	368	44	-37	-1,341	-158	-36	-10
\$50,000-74,999	\$1,875	-527	66	212	-69	-1,563	263	604	-32
\$75,000-99,999	\$2,500	-148	33	317	54	-1,599	-337	1,247	65
\$100,000-149,999	\$3,750	-63	-87	-7	7	-1,770	-736	4,199	1,072
\$150,000-199,999	\$5,000	133	77	-6	-1	-726	-335	1,932	2,426
\$200,000 or more	--	-18	-3	57	0	-579	-450	691	1,518

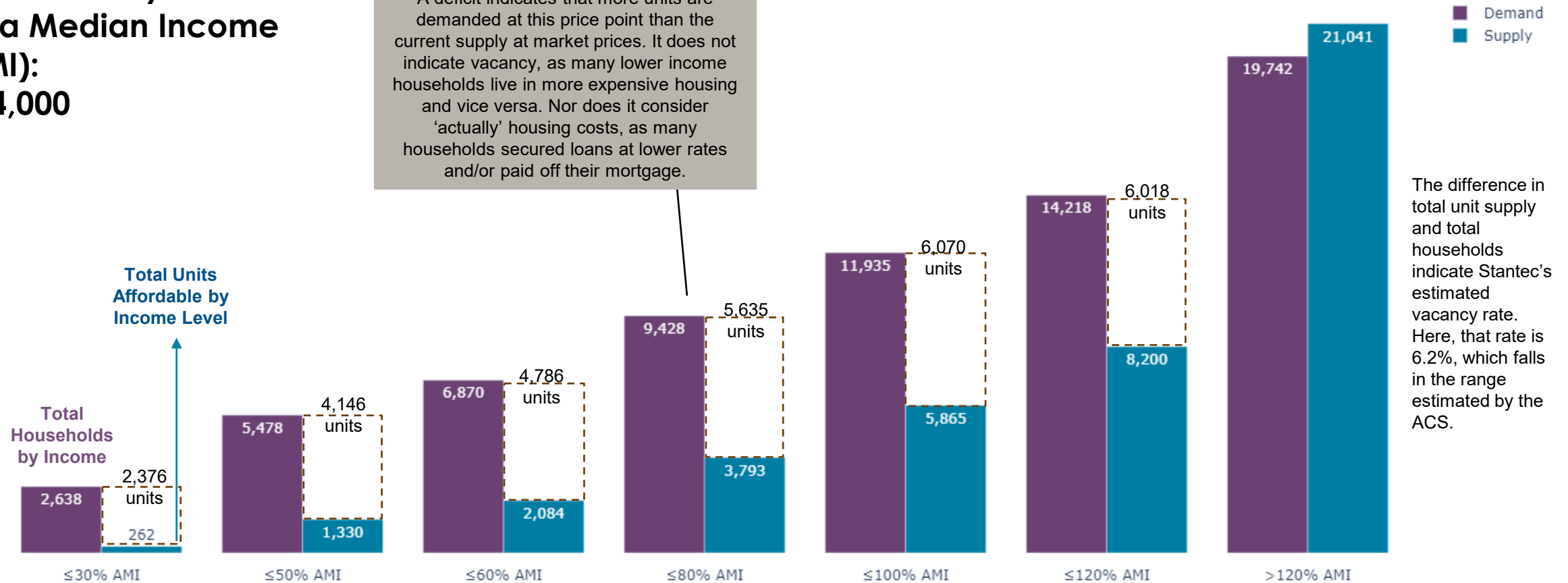


# GAP ANALYSIS | WORKFORCE HOUSING GAP

At market rates, many households earning workforce wages or single-income households would struggle to find affordable housing. The deficit is most pronounced at household incomes less than \$47,000. Declining interest rates would make existing housing more affordable, however rates in 2024 are in line with more historical norms.

**Cleveland-Elyria 2023  
Area Median Income  
(AMI):  
\$94,000**

A deficit indicates that more units are demanded at this price point than the current supply at market prices. It does not indicate vacancy, as many lower income households live in more expensive housing and vice versa. Nor does it consider 'actually' housing costs, as many households secured loans at lower rates and/or paid off their mortgage.



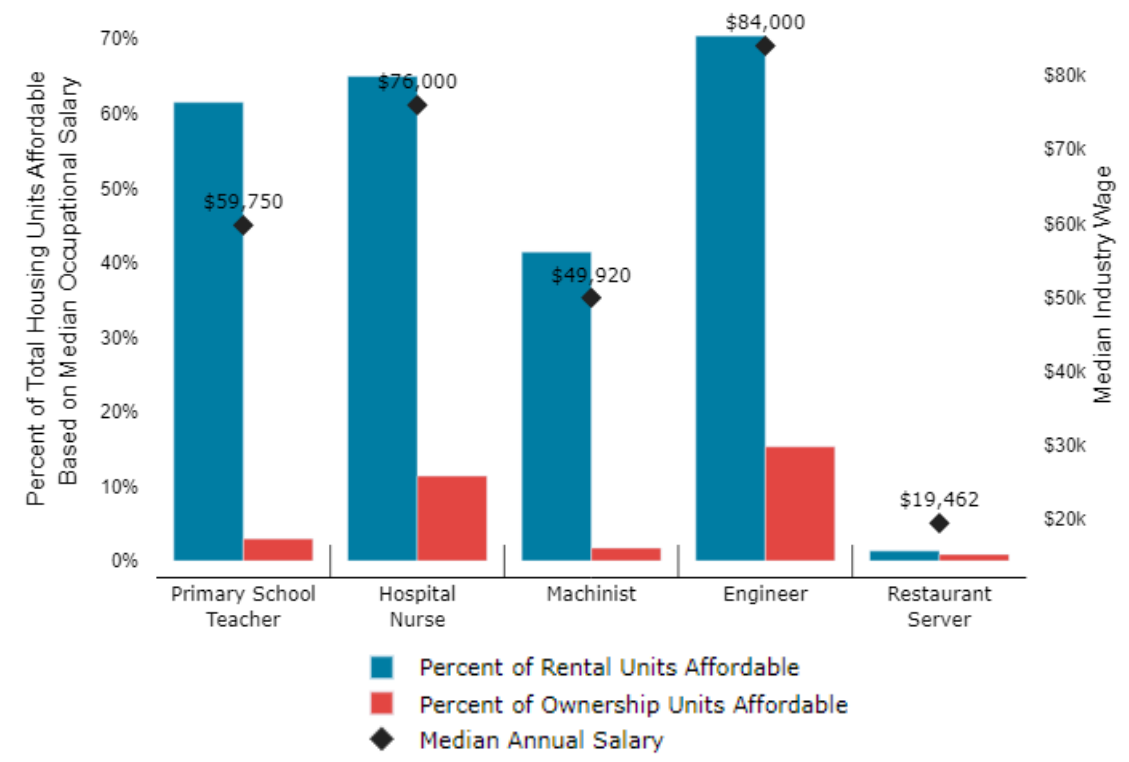
## Workforce housing is required

There are 173 workforce households for every 100 units of housing affordable for workforce incomes. While affordable rentals exist, there are not enough of them.

55% of Mentor *households* earn lower than 80% of AMI (\$75,200), but only 18% of the total housing stock and 65% of the estimated rental stock is affordable at this level. The gap is more severe at 30-50% of AMI (\$28,200-\$47,000). These households are more likely to be single-income earners working in common New Economy Low Wage service sector jobs, such as in restaurants or retail.

While the *rent* of housing can be affordable for those on workforce incomes, the supply of workforce units available relative to the demand from workforce households is mismatched. There are 173 workforce households for every 100 units of housing affordable at that income level. This drives the high rates of rent-burdened households in the community.

Affordability Relative to Common Industry Median Wages



Source(s): Wages are derived from QCEW, Housing Availability from Stantec

<b>Active Adult: Renter</b>		
The V Living Experience: Villas	Multiple Addresses	63
	<i>total</i>	63

<b>Independent Living</b>		
Vitalia Senior Living	8180 Mentor Way	89
Governor's Port	8460 Westport Drive	50
Parker Place	7960 Center St	124
	<i>total</i>	263

<b>Assisted Living</b>		
Vitalia Senior Living	8180 Mentor Hills Dr	45
The Abbey Assisted Living	9415 Johnnycake Ridge Rd	16
Brookdale Mentor	5700 Emerald Court	85
Danbury Senior Living	9150 Lake Shore Blvd	59
The Enclave at Newell Creek	7900 Center Street	71
Governor's Pointe	8506 Hendricks Road	34
Haven Home Assisted Living	7395 Rockingham Road	14
Salida Woods by New Perspective	7685 Lakeshore Blvd	92
The Preserve at Mentor Ridge	8161 Norton Parkway	48
	<i>total</i>	464

<b>Memory Care</b>		
Vitalia Senior Living	8190 Mentor Hills Dr.	16
Symphony at Mentor	8155 Mentor Hills Dr.	78
Brookdale Mentor	5700 Emerald Court	14
CareCore Mentor	8881 Schaefer Street	16
Danbury Senior Living	9150 Lakeshore Blvd	16
The Enclave at Newell Creek	7900 Center Street	40
The Preserve at Mentor Ridge	8161 Norton Parkway	56
	<i>total</i>	236

# Senior Housing Market Dynamics

Mentor’s community is aging. Providing adequate senior housing appropriate to the community is advantageous for the long-time health and prosperity of the community. Currently, infrastructure is lacking for affordable, accessible housing connected to service and support relative to current and future demand.

Adequate senior housing can ensure neighborhood transition, helping seniors move out of larger homes that require more maintenance into smaller homes, apartments, and townhomes within Mentor. As empty-nesters transition out of larger single-family homes, new opportunity exists for younger households and families to enter the market.

A range of senior housing products exist across the care spectrum, ranging from active adult communities with owners and rental units tailored towards fostering community, to independent and assisted living facilities that help seniors with daily needs, to full-care nursing and memory care facilities.

After a market study of Mentor’s senior housing inventory and senior demographics both today and projected forward to 2028, there is strong demand for increasing senior products across the spectrum, except in memory and nursing care where there is an overproduction relative to need. The strongest growth is the need for assisted living and active adult communities.



## Senior housing demand is robust: Especially more affordable senior options

Current supply is lacking for suitable housing affordable for seniors on lower fixed incomes. The market *is* responding with market rate units, but many are in the more ‘luxury’ market rather than meeting lower and middle incomes. The market is meeting the *current* need for assisted living and memory care, but this demand will grow as the substantial 70+ cohort ages.

Even with the growing number of senior housing and care facilities in the Mentor area, demand is expected to increase across the senior housing type spectrum. As Mentor’s population advances in age from mid to late-retirement in the ensuing decade, demand exists for lower maintenance rental and for sale homes, independent living, and affordable units.

Much of the existing stock is centered in Assisted Living and Memory Care, largely accommodating local demand. The largest change in demand will be for more affordable rental options as households with lower fixed incomes sell larger homes that they’ve likely owned for a long-period of time. The availability of active adult communities for ownership and rent – both market rate and subsidized affordable– would accelerate transition away from older homes, facilitating more suitable homes for aging persons and open-up single-family housing stock.

### Estimated Market Demand: Senior Housing By Type\*

Estimated Market Needs: Totals			
	2023	2028	Percent Change
Active-Adult For-Sale	266	311	17%
Active-Adult Rental	225	290	29%
Active-Adult Affordable	494	440	-11%
Independent Living	577	450	-22%
Assisted Living	8	181	2211%
Memory Care	46	104	123%
<b>Total Senior</b>	<b>1,616</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>10%</b>

*\*For a more extensive breakdown of demand methodology and definition of product types, please see the appendix.*

### Identified Housing Gaps

- 1. Mentor households are over-housed.** Mentor households are smaller than the homes they inhabit, especially so when viewed through a model that projects demand based on household size and composition. Even adjusting for current existing preferences where people maximize space as incomes increase, units are large, and built for family types that are *now* less common in the area.
- 2. Housing for workforce households.** There is a significant deficit of workforce housing in Mentor. Single-income households and dual-income households working in Mentor's large service sector or living on fixed incomes would struggle to find affordable units – especially so in the ownership market. The deficit of affordable units means many households are paying more than 30% of their income on housing, leading to high rates of rent-burdened households.
- 3. Appropriate housing for seniors across the cost-spectrum.** Many seniors are aging in place in homes they've owned for decades. These homes may be increasingly unsuitable, especially in the next 5-10 years as large blocks of Mentor's population enters their late 60s/70s.
- 4. New market-rate rentals, preferably mixed income.** Mentor lacks new market-rate rental housing designed and built on more modern specs, including smaller bedroom sizes. Much of the existing stock is outdated. Market rate rental housing can attract and retain younger households and add to a sense of place. Mixed income and mixed age housing would be appropriate.



07

HOUSING  
NEEDS

# HOUSING NEEDS | PROJECTIONS

## Population and household growth are projected to stabilize

Given the strong local economy and projected regional employment growth, new households will continue to migrate to Lake County. We project growth rates based on the 10-year growth historical growth rate.

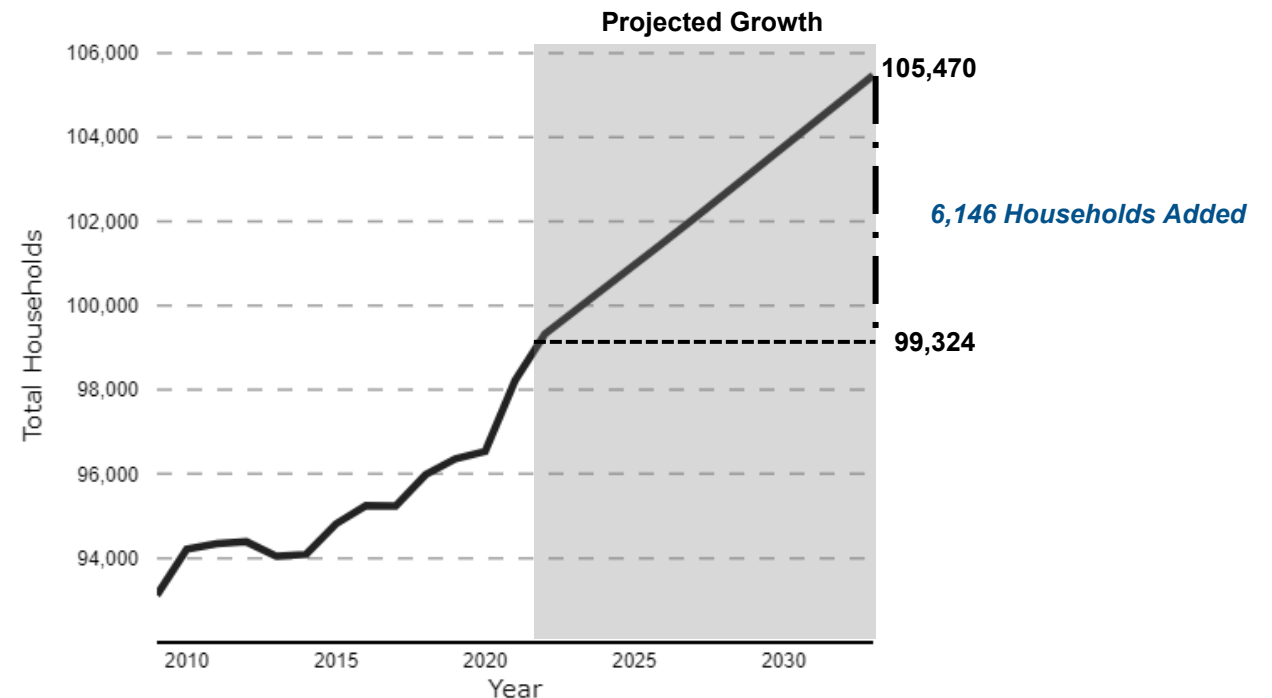
Household growth is a function of housing units. Local demand for housing may grow, but if a municipality is not adding units, household growth will occur elsewhere. This has been the case in Mentor. Mentor has only captured 1.2% of household growth in Lake County between 2009-2022. This has diluted its proportion of Lake County households from 21.1% in 2009 to 19.4% in 2022.

For this exercise, Lake County households are projected to grow at its historical 10-year historical growth rate. In an ideal development landscape, we assume Mentor would be able to capture 20% of new development – a number in line with its historic capture rate of total housing units, especially given Mentor’s location at the economic and commercial center of Lake County.

### Mentor Projected Household Growth

6,146 (Lake County Projected Growth)  
x 20% (capture rate)  
1,229 households

Projected Household Growth: Lake County



### Recommendations: Market vs Need

While Mentor still has a gap for affordable workforce housing for households earning 80% or less of AMI, this need cannot be filled through new construction. A 1-to-1 match is not possible. So how does it work?

#### Adding New Supply

Nationwide, housing prices have skyrocketed due to inadequate supply relative to demand. The rising cost of housing as a percentage of household income can be detrimental to households, local small businesses, and employers. Communities often desire new housing to meet immediate affordable needs.

This is, however, a challenge. Raising construction, financing, insurance and material costs make building new housing expensive. Density – multi-family housing, townhomes and duplexes, condominiums, and smaller lots – can help lower costs, but rarely to a price affordable to lower to middle incomes.

Counterintuitively, adding supply, even at the ‘top end,’ can alleviate rent and home value increases. When supply is tight and vacancy rates are low, landlords can charge more for rent knowing they can fill their units while also having less incentive to invest in rehabilitation and maintenance. Adding supply requires landlords to compete for tenants, either by lowering prices or improving units.

Adding new supply – even if it is relatively expensive given development costs – can ‘open up’ new housing options. Higher-income households with the ability and desire to pay more for higher quality housing have the option to do so. By shifting ‘up’ into newly built housing, this opens up the market in the middle. With fewer households competing for middle-income housing, prices stabilize or decrease in older units. This again allows lower-income households to ‘shift-up’ in the market.

In the context of Mentor, Mentor’s recent development has heavily biased single-family homes, often targeted for the mid to upper market. Adding a diversity of housing types can induce a range of changes. New market rate multi-family can induce existing landlords to upgrade or renovate units or lower rents to attract tenants. More appropriate senior housing across a range of housing types currently missing from the market can have a ripple effect on the market, opening up more single-family housing units appropriate for younger families. Adding housing units across the board can create more housing supply, thereby helping to alleviate market pressures that have been causing rents and home values to become increasingly unaffordable.

#### Adding Affordable Units

Current housing markets inadequately provide housing for low-income households nationwide, and Mentor is no exception. Consistent effort should be made to leverage local, state, and federal policies to bolster affordable housing construction that meets the needs of households earning 60% or less of Area Median Income. Channeling this investment into mixed-income communities and developments builds greater economic and social resiliency and can help prevent the concentration of disinvestment and policy.

#### Pro-Development Mindset

Increasing housing supply requires pro-development policies that encourage housing policy – policies that require communities to recognize that pro-housing policies broadly benefit the community.

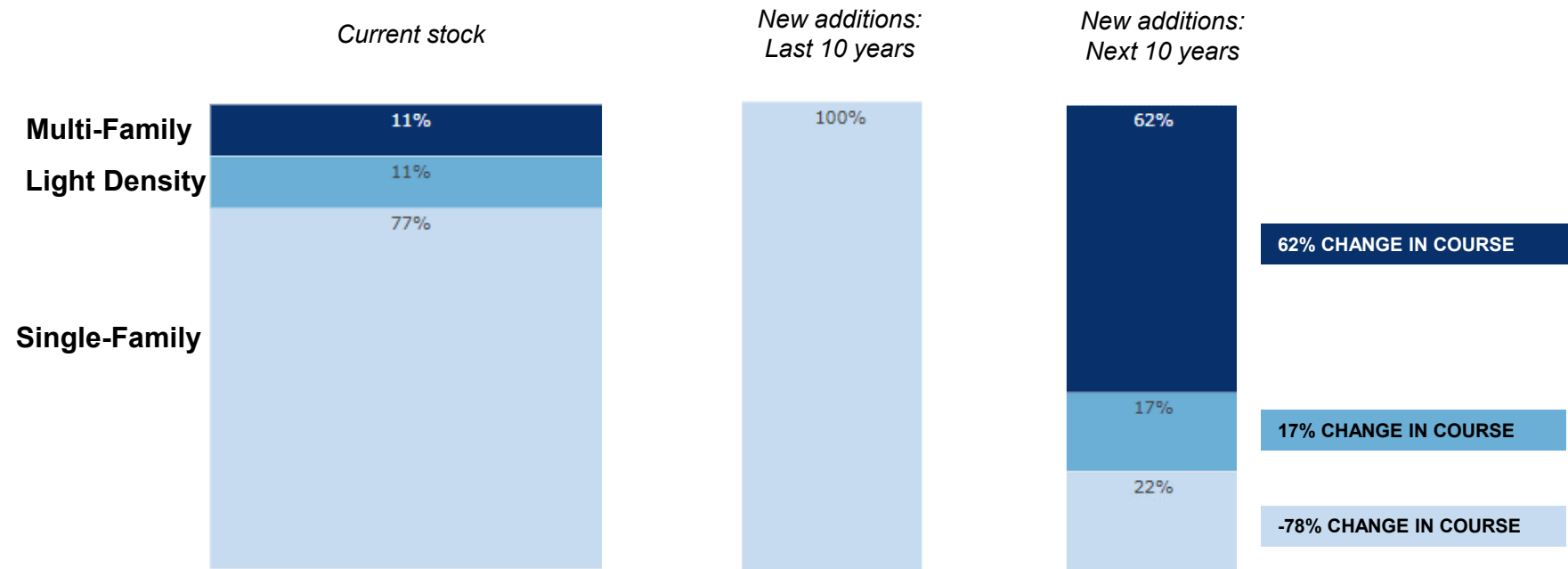
## Projected needs by housing type

Projected future need emphasizes a range of housing types, appropriate to attract and retain a wide-variety of households. This mix in housing types is common in suburban areas with increasingly limited developable land. Future need corrects for recent historic biases for single-family homes.

All recent market-rate development is oriented to single-family development. New forthcoming senior projects in the pipeline introduce a greater mix of housing types, but for the most part, Mentor has avoided adding multi-family and 'light density' (townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes) housing types for the last forty years. This should change, especially as developable land disappears in Mentor, shifting development 'up' rather than 'out.'

More dense housing types can reinforce existing retail districts, offer housing types currently missing from the Mentor market, and fit the needs of existing seniors while also attracting younger households. Multi-family can also include condominium style developments.

**Housing by Structure Type: Current, Recent and Future**



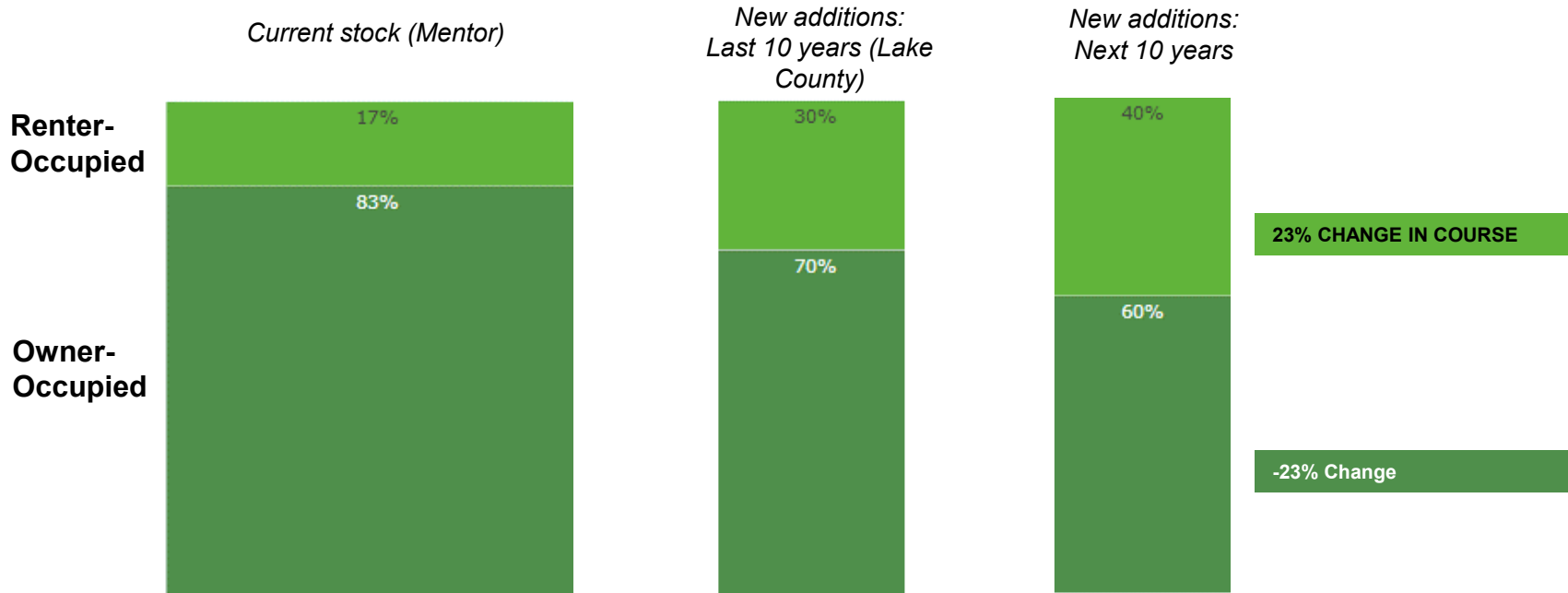
## Projected needs by housing tenure

As households across income and age spectrums increasingly find renting more economically suitable and even desirable, Mentor should seek to add more rental housing (the recent addition of renter households has been driven by single-family and condominium rentals. Rental housing can be built in various housing types, including single-family, townhomes, duplexes and multi-family housing units.

Mentor’s recent development biases home-ownership. As the economics of home-ownership change – in particular for younger and older households – Mentor should correct the imbalance by adding more rental housing. The addition of new rental housing can also help lower pricing pressure on the existing, older housing stock, while also encouraging existing landlords to improve rental housing stock to attract tenants.

In broader Lake County and in suburbs nationwide that are shifting towards being mini-centers of their own, recent development has increasingly added rental housing to attract and retain new layers of households crucial to growing workforce needs.

**Housing by Tenure: Current, Recent and Future**



# HOUSING NEEDS | PROJECTION BY BEDROOM SIZE

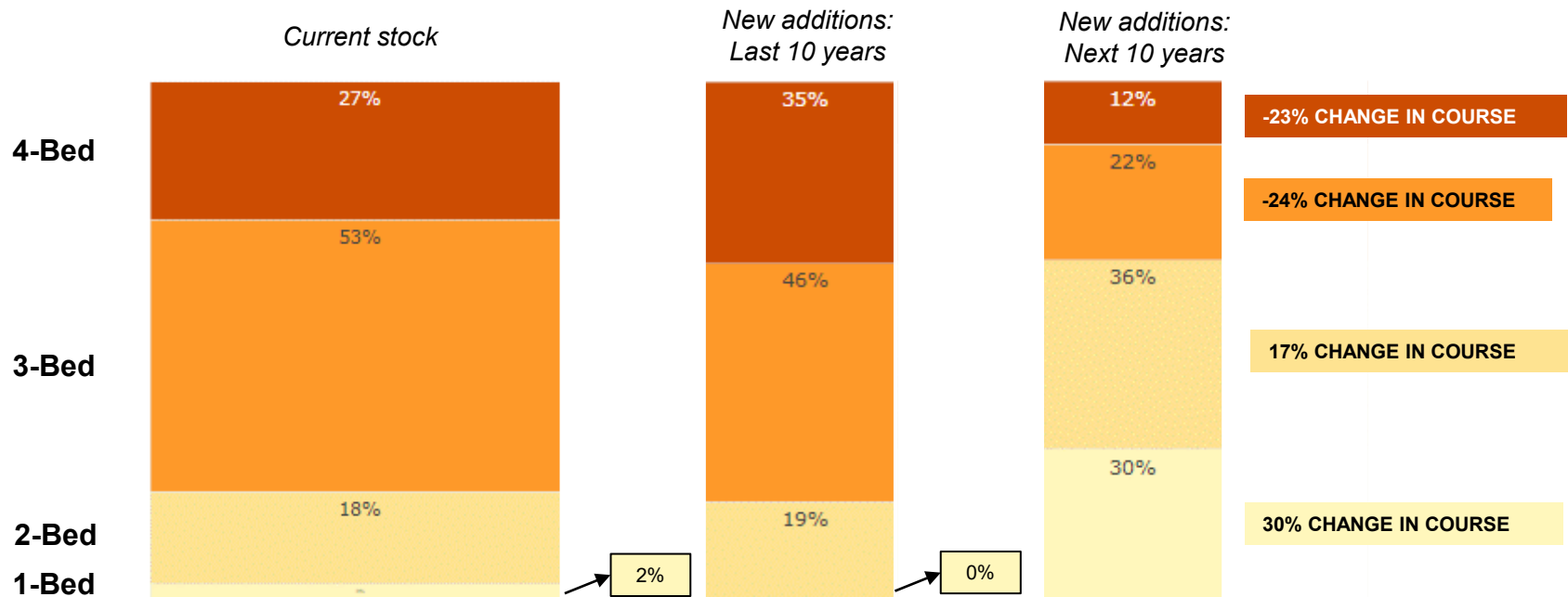
## Projected needs by bedroom size

Households are smaller today than they've been historically. Likewise, Mentor's household size is shrinking due to aging households. Adding more smaller units can help create more appropriate housing for smaller households, while also opening up larger homes as smaller households choose more suitable units.

Mentor's existing stock heavily favors 3- and 4-bedroom homes. Many of Mentor's current residents are significantly over-housed. Recent development has largely reinforced this trend.

The addition of more multi-family and missing-middle style housing would help shift the ratio towards smaller units – units that can help many who wish to age in place do so, as well as attract younger, smaller households to the area. This would *open up* existing *underutilized* housing for new families. In other words, smaller units meets a serious unmet need in the community.

**Housing by Number of Bedrooms: Current, Recent and Future**





## Other considerations play into the calculation of overall housing need

Total housing needs are the sum of units required to achieve market equilibrium, to replace units lost to demolition, and to provide for projected household growth. The sum equates to the total projected new units for a 10-year time horizon.

**Vacancy Rate** adjustment is based on the number of additional units to maintain market equilibrium. This number differs based on ownership and rental markets – here we use two estimates often listed in academic studies to indicate market equilibrium. The ACS was used for the rental market, and 3-year average inventory for ownership. Mentor’s vacancy rates are *low* for both rental and ownership product. The recommended adjustment to bring the market into equilibrium is 788 units for ownership housing and 241 units for the rental market.

**Replacement** is the replacement rate of housing due to demolitions or substandard housing. The national replacement rate was chosen here.

**Household growth** is determined by the projected growth of the Lake County region, and the proportion of units ‘captured’ by Mentor.

	Market Equilibrium	Mentor Rate	Unit Adjustment
<b>Vacancy</b> (Ownership)	2.00%	0.04%	<b>277</b>
<b>Vacancy</b> (Rental)	5.00%	3.50%	<b>46</b>

	General Annual Need	Total Annual Replacement Units	Unit Adjustment
<b>Replacement</b> (per year)	0.09%	18	<b>180</b>

	2023 Housing Units	2033 Projected Housing Units	Unit Adjustment
<b>Household Growth</b>	20,564	21,793	<b>1,229</b>

**1,732  
New  
Units**

## Other considerations play into the calculation of overall housing need (continued)

### 10-year development horizon

**Total New Housing Units in Mentor:** 1,732

	<u>Proportion</u>	<u>Units</u>
<b>For Ownership</b>	60%	1,039
<b>For Rental</b>	40%	693
<b>Rental Market</b>		
<b>Senior Rentals</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>277</b>
<i>Senior Market Rate</i>	60%	166
<i>Senior Affordable</i>	40%	111
<b>General Market</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>416</b>
<i>Market Rate (Multi-Family)</i>	80%	333
<i>Workforce (Multi-Family)</i>	20%	83
<b>Ownership Market</b>		
<b>Senior Ownership</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>416</b>
<i>Condominium</i>	60%	249
<i>Townhome/Single Family</i>	40%	166
<b>General Market</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>624</b>
<i>Condominium</i>	20%	125
<i>Townhome</i>	20%	125
<i>Single-Family Detached</i>	60%	374

**Housing Needs:** The recommended growth trajectory supports Mentor’s transition from a largely single-family residential community to a more dynamic suburban hub for Lake County. As existing retail at places like the mall continue to face difficulties, opportunity exists to revitalize that area and create a more dynamic city center that currently is missing in town. The proposed style of developments reinforce greater housing density. Further, the additional housing targets the unmet needs recognized in the housing study: Largely, a diversity of housing types for aging citizens who would like to age in place, for younger households interested in living in a vibrant suburban community near a growing employment hub, and workforce housing for people who work across Mentor’s industries.

Additionally, single-family recommendations can span new product types. Smaller lot sizes, cluster homes, and smaller sized homes can all be attractive ways to add new single-family home supply. Higher quality, large homes will also remain in demand – Mentor remains a desirable place to live for families.

Building new housing across product types can open-up Mentor’s more abundant middle-tier single family housing supply to a new generation of families who prioritize larger homes for growing families - an era many millennial families are aging into.

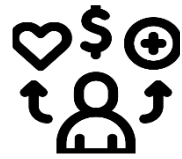
## Key themes from the quantitative and qualitative research

These themes relate to housing challenges, needs and opportunities that emerged from focus groups, conversations with stakeholders, and meetings with City staff.



### CHALLENGES

- Regulation
- Land availability
- Cost of infrastructure
- Growth in development costs
- Lack of recent development makes it hard to set rent expectations
- Lack of a hub or activated mixed use district



### NEEDS

- Single family rental housing
- Senior/ Empty nester housing- both multifamily and lower density
- Upscale apartments and condominiums
- Attainable housing options
- Housing targeted to young adults
- Housing integrated with an activated commercial and entertainment district



### OPPORTUNITIES

- Mall redevelopment
- Bolton property
- Other infill opportunities
- Regulatory improvements
- Upgrading existing multifamily properties
- Preserving the affordability of existing multifamily properties

### Three important submarkets can be thought of as important targets of future housing development.

The analysis, and the insights of interviewees and focus group participants, point toward future housing development being targeted to three residential submarkets—the evolving needs of Mentor’s existing residents, the workforce needed in Mentor’s businesses, and the next generation of individuals and families that will build their future in Mentor.

- **Mentor’s existing residents.** The household needs of existing residents evolve over time. Some will seek move-up housing. Others are moving into a phase where they are looking for lower maintenance options—which exist in lower density and multifamily formats, and in a range of ownership formats. Still others may be currently renting but would like to buy a starter home.
- **Area workforce.** Businesses are booming in Mentor, and housing availability plays a role in those businesses being able to attract the workers they need. Some of that workforce is looking for entry level housing options or reasonably priced rental housing. Some younger professionals appreciate upscale new construction rental communities.
- **Next generation Mentor residents.** Being an older community, a generational turnover will be occurring in Mentor that can reenergize community life in a variety of ways. Younger individuals and households will value the full range of Mentor’s existing housing stock—including its single-family homes. They will also appreciate new starter home options. And if available, some would be attracted to upscale, multifamily communities anchored in distinctive locations.



### Mentor's housing needs

- 1. Growth trajectory.** In a supportive housing development context, Mentor can capture 20% of Lake County's projected housing growth over the next decade. That amounts to over 1,200 new housing units.
- 2. Projected housing needs.** To meet estimated needs, under the given growth scenario the following mix of housing units are recommended.
  - **Housing format.** 62% multifamily units, 17% light density units, and 22% single family homes
  - **Housing tenure.** 60% ownership units, and 40% rental units.
  - **Bedroom mix.** 30% 1-bedroom units, 36% 2-bedroom units, 22% 3-bedroom units, and 12% 4+ bedroom units.
- 3. Adjusted housing growth.** When taking current low vacancy rates into account, and typical rates of replacement for homes, the adjusted need is 1,732 housing units over the next ten years. A projected breakdown of those units on page 105 shows those units allocated between ownership and rental units, senior and general occupancy housing, market rate and workforce units, and single family and multifamily units.
- 4. Key submarkets.** As Mentor supports and fosters housing growth, it will be beneficial to consider adding a housing mix that meets the needs of three key submarkets—Mentor's existing residents, the workforce needed in Mentor's businesses, and the next generation of individuals and families that will build their future in Mentor.



**08**

**HOUSING  
STRATEGIES**

### Strategies Menu

The following pages offer a menu of strategies that are responsive to Mentor's unique challenges, needs and opportunities.

These strategies are recommended because they are relevant for Mentor's particular development context, and address identified community needs based on this study's research and analysis.

They are offered for discussion, consideration and prioritization.

#### PRODUCTION STRATEGIES

- City code revisions (including eliminating the referendum)
- Apartments and condominiums
- Workforce units in market rate apartments
- Rent-restricted workforce housing
- Senior housing
- Accessory Dwelling Units

#### PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

- Preserve the condition and affordability of existing multifamily properties
- Community Land Trusts
- Rehab Support for homes

#### SITE-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

- Great Lakes Mall
- Infill development and redevelopment

## Adjust zoning requirements that are impediments to new housing development

Zoning modifications can increase the pace and variety of housing development.

**Context.** Mentor’s zoning code and regulatory framework includes a range of provisions and processes that make housing development more difficult—in particular for types of housing that would meet important community needs but are currently in short supply in Mentor. Thoughtful revisions to the regulatory context will be an important element in facilitating housing development that responds to community needs.

Recommended changes to the City’s regulatory framework would preserve the character of existing neighborhoods, but expand the opportunity for housing and mixed use (housing over retail) development in underdeveloped areas.

The following changes to the City’s regulatory context are elevated as particularly important in reducing barriers and expanding Mentor’s potential for producing housing that meets local needs.

**Address the referendum requirement.** In the housing study research, many have noted the chilling effect the referendum requirement has on housing development. It puts the general public in a project review role that is typically served by elected or appointed officials. That extends the development timeline and introduces a major element of uncertainty for a prospective developer who must invest significant resources in planning and design of a project knowing that it may be voted down by the subset of the public that is motivated to vote on the project.

Changing the referendum requirement would entail a change to the City charter, which could be done in a way that retains the requirement for conservation zoned lands (C-1 or C-2 zoning) but leaves approval of projects in other zoning districts in the purview of elected and appointed bodies.

An alternative to be considered is to proactively rezone properties to zoning districts that support

housing development. This may also require a referendum, per the city charter requirement, but it would do so for areas of the City before specific projects are being proposed. If passed it would lower barriers to development in the areas that were rezoned.

**Allow housing in commercial districts.** Some of the strongest opportunities for housing redevelopment are in the City’s commercially zoned areas, but under the City’s current zoning code housing is prohibited in commercial districts.

There are important benefits to allowing residential development in commercial zoning districts. The demand for retail and offices has evolved over time, and in many cases there isn’t enough demand in commercial districts to support strong businesses in every commercial space.





## Adjust zoning requirements that are impediments to new housing development (continued)

Zoning modifications can increase the pace and variety of housing development.

That can leave empty storefronts, underutilized buildings, and deteriorating property conditions. Permitting multifamily housing in these districts supports the market evolution of these areas.

Allowing housing as a permitted use in commercial zoning districts also supports reinvestment in properties that already have a nonconforming residential use.

Mentor's commercial areas are key opportunities for infill housing development and mixed use districts. Allowing multifamily housing in commercial districts would open up those opportunities.

### **Create a new multifamily zoning district.**

Multifamily development is an important part of Mentor's housing fabric with multiple benefits for the City. It attracts and retains key population segments such as young adult singles and couples, workforce recruits

to Mentor businesses, and empty nesters and seniors who may be looking for a lower maintenance option.

Multifamily housing has additional benefits such as building the population base that supports local businesses, and strengthening the City's tax base and long-term financial sustainability.

Despite these benefits, Mentor currently lacks a multifamily zoning district that serves this purpose. The existing R-10 District doesn't allow the type of high quality apartment and condominium development that is occurring in other suburban locations. Consequently, even if suitable locations are identified there is limited ability to seek zoning approvals for those projects.

Addressing this gap requires creating a new zoning district that allows more density than the R-10 District. The existing R-10 District

could be retained to support lower density multifamily development, including townhomes and mixed density multifamily communities.

### **Reduce multifamily parking requirements.**

Parking is a major driver of residential development cost, and tenant needs are typically lower than arbitrary requirements. Reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements for multifamily development can make a big difference in lowering the cost of development and attracting housing investment.

**Strategy.** Address these priority regulatory constraints through the zoning code, zoning map and charter amendments suggested in the preceding discussions.



### New multifamily development attracts new demographics and updates Mentor's image

High quality, market rate, apartments and condominiums are attractive to a range of populations—including many younger singles and couples, as well as empty nesters and retirees. Mentor's market is attractive.

**Context.** Multifamily development supports a community in several ways. It can retain young adult singles and couples in Mentor that otherwise choose not to own. It provides a lower maintenance option for seniors and empty nesters, freeing up single family homes for new buyers. With many middle-class families facing new hurdles to home-ownership, renting is increasingly common among households across income and occupational spectrums.

Multifamily housing can also support community development goals. Strategically locating market rate and mixed-income multifamily housing can support community retail, adding character and a sense of place to a community. Mall retrofits are increasingly common in revitalizing regional shopping malls. Mentor's Great Lakes Mall is primed for redevelopment.

Suburban communities are also rethinking development patterns, especially in the context of aging housing and limited developable land. By creating mixed-use, higher density neighborhoods, suburban cities like Mentor incorporate mixed-use and transit-oriented development into vibrant neighborhoods that add vibrancy and a new sense of place.

New multifamily housing development faces challenges in Mentor. While many similar communities are attracting market-rate development, Mentor's restrictive regulatory context generates risk for investors. This is a disincentive to developers who may respond by building elsewhere.

**Strategy.** Invite interest from developers with track records of building high quality development in suburban

settings. Focus development planning on specific areas of opportunity, maintaining attention on City goals related to meeting community housing needs through providing a mix of housing types and formats and including workforce housing options.

Make revisions to the City's zoning and regulatory frameworks to reduce impediments to development while retaining high quality development standards.



Englewood, CO Suburban Retrofit and Mall Redevelopment

### Market rate development can drive some workforce housing production

Market rate apartment development can include dwelling units that are set at rent levels that are attainable for moderate income households in Mentor’s workforce.

**Context.** Given the right incentives and support, a set of rent-limited, workforce housing units, can be co-mixed in a new market rate apartment development.

Sometimes referred to as “inclusionary housing” policies or “inclusionary zoning” requirements, cities can require or encourage the inclusion of workforce housing units. The following are three common approaches to achieving that outcome.

- Cities can encourage the inclusion of workforce housing units through publicly stated goals and conversations with developers.
- Cities can require workforce housing units when providing public financial support for a project.
- Cities can require workforce housing units in all new multifamily

developments.

In each of these cases, the rent-restricted workforce housing units will require public financial support to offset the required rent reduction over the duration of the requirement.

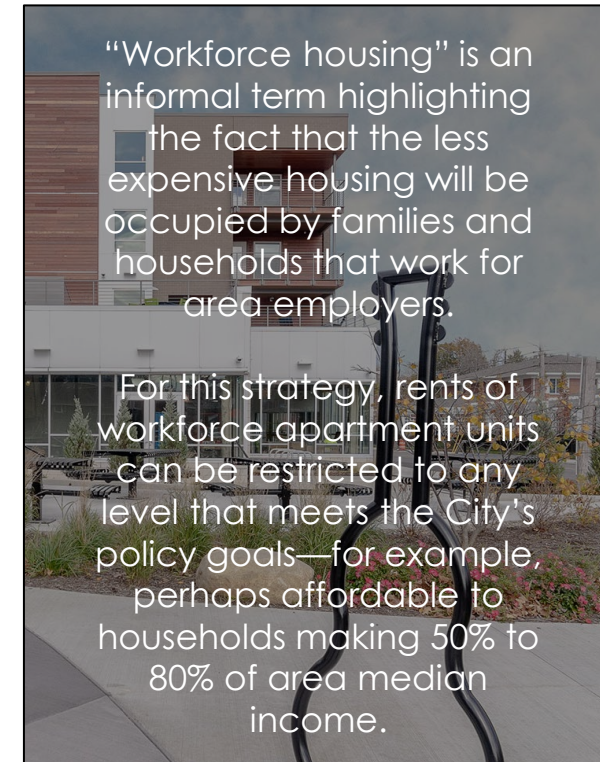
**Strategy.** This strategy entails choosing a path for promoting workforce housing units in new apartment development, as previously discussed. Once selected, the requirement should be codified and communicated, including specifics regarding the percentage of units required (5% to 10% requirements are common), the length of the required commitment, and the offsetting financial support and other incentives that are available. (Additional incentives could include the waiver of

fees, density bonuses, parking reductions, etc.)

Tax increment financing or the equivalent is suitable for supporting the workforce units and would generally be sufficient financial support for that purpose.

**Case Study.** Glenville Circle North in Cleveland OH, a 63-unit, mixed income development, was developed by The Finch Group and completed in 2019.

Rents for market rate units are around \$1,100 for 1-bedroom units, and \$1,600 for 2-bedroom units, while affordable unit rents are set at rates affordable to households making 60% of area median income.



### Federal tax credits are the primary vehicle for creating new housing with rent caps

Add to the inventory of workforce housing in Mentor by supporting the development of one or more tax-credit funded, workforce housing project

**Context.** The most direct way of producing new affordable housing units is by leveraging federal affordable housing resources to build workforce apartment buildings. Affordable housing tax credits are the primary engine for producing such housing. Tax credit funded housing units are priced at rent levels that are affordable for moderate income households.

At the 60% area median income level (household income of around \$56,000 per year) rent levels are around \$1,020 for 1-bedroom units and \$1,220 for 2-bedroom units.

**Strategy.** Build a relationship with a community development organization or developer that builds high quality, tax credit funded, workforce housing. Collaborate in seeking a suitable site, and on identifying and

securing the financial resources that make the project viable.

These developments are more likely to be supported by community members and elected officials if it is one element in a broader housing development mix. Mixed-income communities are more resilient and less likely to face disinvestment while ensuring many households can live in the communities they work.

Supporting an affordable housing development in Mentor would likely require public financial support from the City of Mentor, in addition to the federal tax credits and other resources.

**Case studies.** Willoughbeach Terrace in Willowick is a 50 unit senior housing development. It was completed in 2017.



## Senior housing is needed across different senior housing types

Senior housing provides a maintenance free housing option designed for older adults, and it often frees up a home that can be reoccupied by a younger family.

**Context.** Senior housing provides a maintenance free housing option designed for older adults, and it often frees up a home that can be reoccupied by a younger family.

For a community that skews significantly older than average and where many households are 'over-housed', Mentor is underserved by senior housing, despite the very recent addition of Vitalia Homes. The senior housing demand analysis found that senior housing products are needed across the board,. Apartment buildings, continuum of care communities and senior-specific homes and townhomes would meet local needs. The market is aware of this pent-up demand and recent housing development interest is largely concentrated in meeting senior needs across different senior product types.

Providing senior housing faces many of the

challenges faced by development in general. In particular, opportunities for such development are limited by site availability. Having said that, the two large scale development opportunities that are available—the Bolton property and the Great Lakes Mall site—could incorporate senior housing in the mix of development types that are provided.

The study also found high demand for lower density senior housing developments that might include patio homes, one level townhomes, or a mix of such formats. An acute need exists for more attainable units, and various funding vehicles exist to support this development type including 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit financing.

**Strategy.** Shaping development futures involves establishing a collaborative conversation with the owners of land, and

inviting the attention of one or more senior housing developers that seem to be a good fit for Mentor.

Public financial support in the form of tax increment financing or tax abatement may or may not be required.

**Case studies.** Vitalia is developing a mix of senior housing types built around a shared community center, including apartments and patio homes. Level of service includes independent living, assisted living, and nursing care.



### Accessory dwelling units add to housing diversity and can meet a range of needs

Some families want to provide a space for a parent or adult child that is close at hand but still offers independence. Others benefit from a secondary source of income.

**Context.** Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) would respond to Mentor community needs by increasing the supply and variety of housing available to residents and prospective residents. ADUs create an important additional income stream for some, and for others they may meet family needs related to caring for family members.

ADUs are smaller housing units that are on the same lot as an existing home and owned by that homeowner. They may be attached to a primary home or built as a separate structure. They are an efficient use of public infrastructure because they introduce a new housing unit where there are existing utilities. The property manager, being the resident of the primary home, is close at hand, which usually ensures good management and responsive attention to issues that arise. ADUs can be attractive for renters who prefer to live in a neighborhood

setting.

Mentor currently allows “attached living quarters” accessory to a single-family home. Occupancy is restricted to servants or family members, and no compensation can be charged. Mentor allows detached living quarters on lots larger than one acre. Occupancy is similarly restricted.

To open the door to this housing type, policy revisions should remove the prohibition on compensation being charged. That presents an extreme disincentive to ADU construction because, on resale, the pool of buyers for a two-unit property, one of which has no commercial value, will be very small.

**Strategy.** For ADUs to be built and address community needs, zoning code revisions are needed, including the removal of the compensation restriction. Removing the prohibition on separate entrances is also

recommended. Other requirements related to building design, and the prohibition of short term rentals are more common, and will not dampen production in the same way.

Many communities pilot ADUs in certain zoning districts or areas, and after being found acceptable and non-disruptive their geography can be expanded.

**Case Studies.** Ohio has just recently set a statutory framework for allowing ADUs, under carefully defined conditions. Cincinnati has been the pioneer in piloting this at the local government level. [This](#) is a detailed and helpful review.

## Older apartment buildings in Mentor are “naturally affordable” and meet important community needs

The goal of this strategy is to preserve the condition and affordability of some of the older apartment buildings in Mentor.

**Context.** NOAH refers to unsubsidized multi-family housing units with rents affordable to households earning incomes at 60-80% of AMI. NOAH housing developments are older multi-family apartment buildings that are often owned by smaller, local landlords. They are common in suburban cities like Mentor where much of the multi-family housing stock was built in the 1970s-1980s. In Mentor, *all* multi-family rental complexes are technically 'NOAH' housing, as Mentor has not added a new multi-family rental building since the late 1970s and existing rents are more affordable than market rate developments elsewhere in Lake County.

These apartment properties face many risks, including underinvestment and deferred maintenance as property owners may lack the incentive to improve properties.

**Strategy.** Preserving the affordability of

workforce housing is more cost-effective than building affordable units. One approach to that is to partner with non-profit organizations to identify, help acquire, and reinvest in apartment buildings—establishing their rent levels at affordable levels in exchange for the public financial support.

Municipalities can also directly incentivize landlords to preserve affordable units. The Saint Paul Rental Rehabilitation Loan Program provides loans to responsible landlords to make property improvements to smaller rental buildings in exchange for affordable unit preservation.

The City of Cleveland incentivizes reinvestment in older buildings in certain neighborhoods by exempting the value of the improvements from taxes for a period of fifteen years.

**Case studies.** In the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, local CDCs have developed a path for assembling a range of housing finance resources to rehabilitate and preserve the affordability of older rental apartments.

The St. Paul Rental; Rehabilitation Loan Program is targeted to smaller rental apartment buildings, with information found [here](#).

A description of Cleveland’s tax abatement program for multifamily property rehabilitation is [here](#).



### Community land trusts create single family homes that cost less over the long term

**Context.** Community land trusts can play a role in creating long-term affordable ownership options for single family or townhome homeowners. The land trust owns the land under a home, while the homeowner owns just the home itself. Future ownership is subject to a legal covenant that runs with the property. The home remains affordable to a succession of homeowners for the entire life of the structure.

There are several models for creating a land trust home.

- A land trust can be the initiator in seeking out and purchase suitable properties and converting them to a land trust ownership model.
- A land trust can build a new home on a vacant property and put it in a land trust ownership model.

- In a buyer initiated model, a land trust can prequalify a household and allow them to identify a property that will meet their needs and the land trust criteria.

Financial subsidy is needed for property repair and rehabilitation, and to write down the land cost.

**Strategy.** Build a relationship with a local community land trust, and work together on defining program parameters that are suitable for Mentor.

**Case studies.** Near West Land Trust formed in 2020, and provides land trust homes in neighborhoods in Ohio City, Tremont, and Clark-Fulton. The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland has a useful overview [article](#) on land trusts in northeast Ohio.





## Supporting home repairs supports Mentor residents and preserves local housing stock

Home maintenance and rehabilitation programs are beneficial in two ways. They support reinvestment in local housing stock that might otherwise slide into disrepair, even as they support families in maintaining their residence in the community.

**Context.** Mentor's existing housing is in demand and for the most part is well maintained. But with its economic diversity and aging population, keeping up with maintenance and reinvestment is a real challenge for some homeowners.

Mentor provides assistance to qualified homeowners to make eligible repairs through its Single Family Housing Rehabilitation Program. Using CDBG funds, Mentor provides up to \$10,000 in funds to households that earn 80% or less of the area median income.

Other homeowner support programs are available. Save the Dream Ohio: Help for Homeowners, provides assistance to homeowners who are facing foreclosure or

struggling to pay their mortgage, utility bills, or other housing-related costs. Local Community Action Agencies provide assistance for utility payments and other housing expenses. Lake-Geauga Habitat for Humanity offers a multifaceted home repair program with the goals of preserving homes, addressing structural health and safety issues, and supporting seniors.

**Strategy.** Mentor can be intentional about weaving information about homeowner support into its communications, advertising not only its own programs but other government and nonprofit resources.

Mentor could augment its existing program if desired, by increasing the resources available per project or the categories of projects that

are eligible for funding.



## City housing goals can be kept in mind as redevelopment plans take shape at the Mall

**Context.** One of the City’s most important opportunities for adding housing and creating a sense of place is at the south end of the Great Lake Mall, where the former Sears property has been sold. In fact, with additional potential at the mall and nearby properties, the possibilities are expanded for renewing the area with additional population and energy. Nationally, such mall transformation has injected new life into the malls, and created attractive settings for new residents.

The scale of opportunity at Great Lakes Mall means it could provide a good amount of new, high quality, multifamily housing. That benefits Mentor by demonstrating the market demand for such housing, and by providing an attractive housing option that isn’t currently available in Mentor.

It could also include housing targeted to other community needs highlighted in this

study, including:

- Multifamily senior housing, with or without senior specific services such as assisted living and memory care. Seniors appreciate the convenience of living close to commercial and community amenities.
- Workforce housing, either in its own building or integrated into a market rate apartment building.

**Strategy.** The developer who purchased the former Sears site at the mall is pursuing a creative redevelopment of the property. (Other parts of the mall property, such as the Macy’s property at the north side of the mall, also have redevelopment potential.)

The developer will be looking to the City of Mentor to confirm that the property is economically distressed, and may be requesting other support as well.

These communications provide an opportunity for the City to introduce consideration of the City’s housing needs, and the types of housing that it seeks to foster in response.

**Case study.** Englewood, CO guided the transformation of underutilized mall and parking into a mixed-use town center. The town center helped transform suburban sprawl patterns of the previous era into a ‘place’ based development.



### New housing can be developed incrementally at infill sites in Mentor

Many or most of Mentor’s opportunities to attract new housing that meets the needs of community members are at infill or redevelopment sites.

**Context.** Mentor is no longer at the furthest edge of the Cleveland metropolitan region. It is largely developed. For that reason the opportunity for new housing is primarily at smaller infill sites, or through the redevelopment of lower value properties.

Redevelopment and infill development are key opportunities for continued city growth, and they benefit the Mentor community by providing needed housing, adding tax base, and upgrading older properties.

Moreover, with planning and intentionality the redevelopment of a larger property, or development and improvements within a district, can yield a special environment with a distinctive character. A walkable mixed-use district centered on public space is lacking in Mentor, and can be sought through master planning and redevelopment.

A set of potential infill development sites are noted in the appendix.

**Strategy.** High quality redevelopment depends on actions such as the following.

- **Regulatory modifications.** In general, Mentor’s zoning code does not support redevelopment at a financially viable density. The recommended zoning code changes above would increase developer interest in infill development.
- **Opportunity identification and master planning.** There are promising locations in Mentor for redevelopment and for creating distinctive places, including key sites along Mentor Avenue. Sites with redevelopment potential can be identified in an analytical process. Following identification, master planning can yield a vision and implementation strategy for

high quality redevelopment, and the creation of environments in Mentor that are more than the sum of their parts.

- **Public financial support.** Redevelopment and infill development are opportunities for meeting housing needs, but they are more expensive than development of bare land. A willingness to provide public financial support is often required to reap the benefits of redevelopment.



### A range of housing strategies can address identified local needs

- 1. The overarching opportunity.** Mentor is a desirable community that exhibits strong demand for its existing homes and apartments, and can offer an attractive context for new housing. The overarching opportunity is to foster new housing development that meets important community needs and contributes to Mentor's economic and social vibrancy. That requires a transition toward a supportive development context for high quality housing growth—which will realize these benefits for Mentor's existing residents, the workforce of its businesses, and its next generation of households.
- 2. Types of strategies.** The housing strategies presented in this section are of three different types.
  - **Production.** Strategies for fostering the production of new housing that meets community needs.
  - **Preservation.** Strategies for preserving the condition and affordability of Mentor's existing housing stock.
  - **Site-specific.** Strategies for making the most of specific development opportunities in Mentor.
- 3. Strategic priorities.** Certain strategies are recommended as priorities because of how they change the overall market context or make an impactful contribution to Mentor's community identity.
  - **Regulatory changes.** Regulatory changes are a precondition to attracting the variety and amount of new housing that will provide the identified community benefits. The most important recommended changes are 1) addressing the referendum requirement as a barrier to development, and 2) allowing housing in commercial zoning districts.
  - **Creating distinctive places.** Creating distinctive, mixed use, amenity rich districts will have a positive impact on Mentor's already strong reputation—generating new excitement and meeting needs for some members of all three target submarkets. Building a distinctive setting is possible at the Great Lakes Mall, and site-based master planning may be able to unleash that potential in other locations as well.



09

**APPENDIX**  
HOUSING SURVEY,  
UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES



# Housing Survey



The Mentor housing survey was launched on November 1, 2023, and collected 931 unique responses.

### Quick Facts

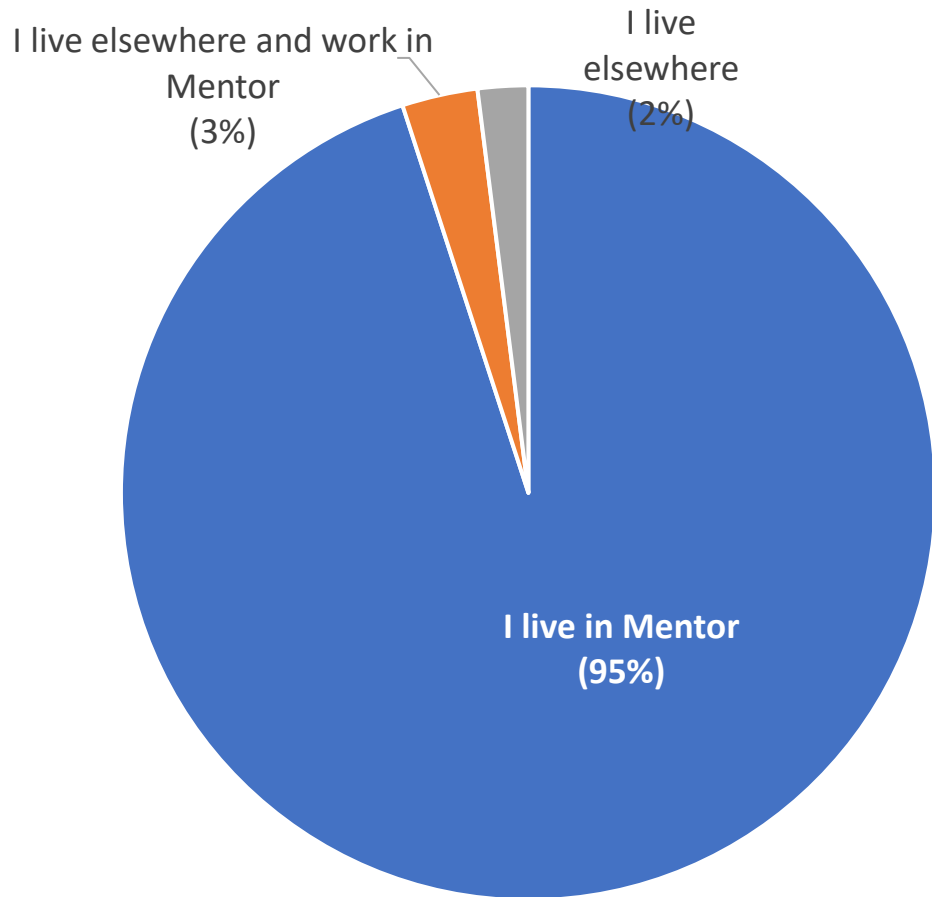
**931** Total Survey Responses

**95%** Participants from Mentor

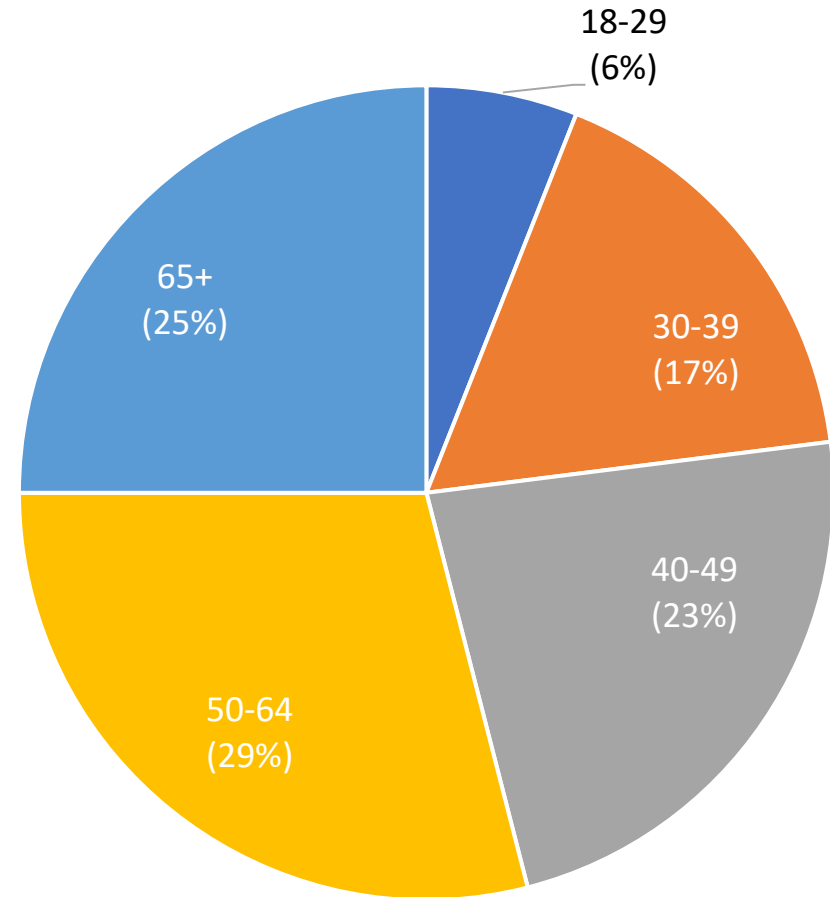


# Who were the respondents?

### Location of Respondent



### Age of Respondent

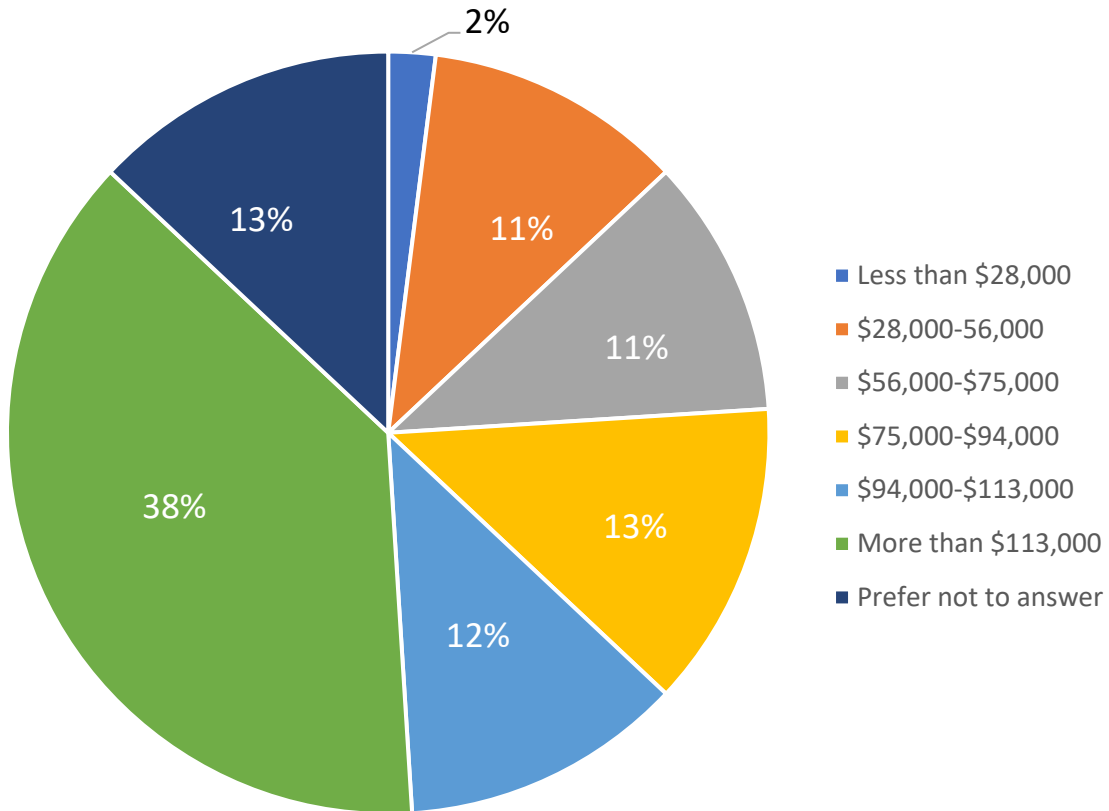




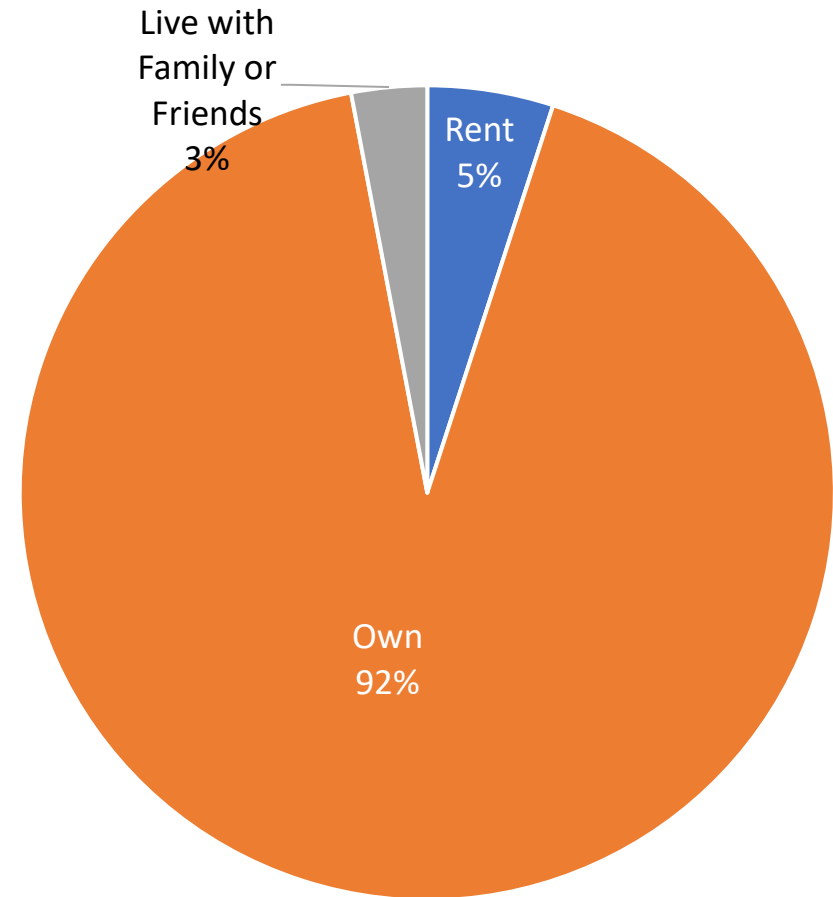


# Who were the respondents?

## Household Income of Respondent



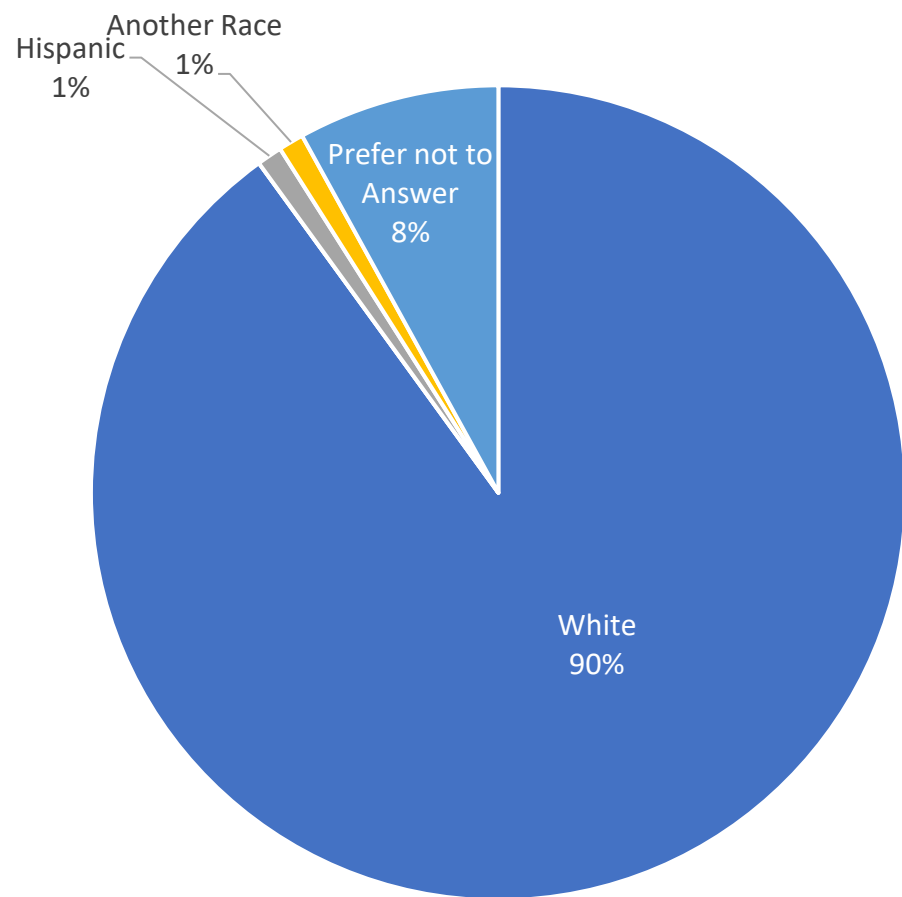
## Own or Rent



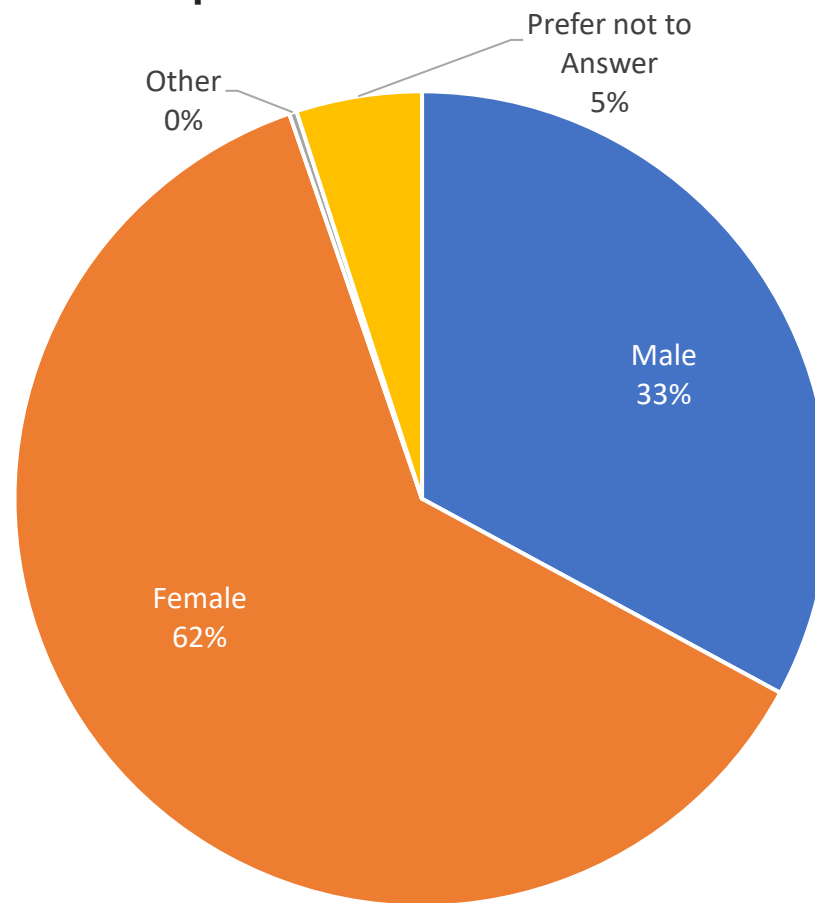


# Who were the respondents?

## Race of Respondent



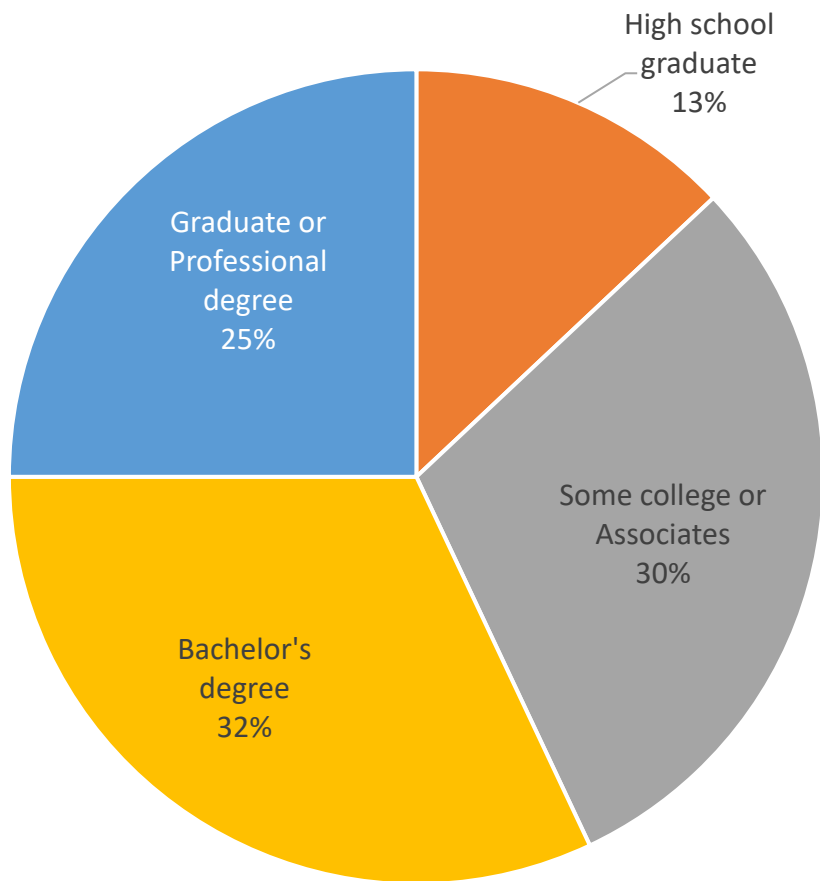
## Gender of Respondent





# Who were the respondents?

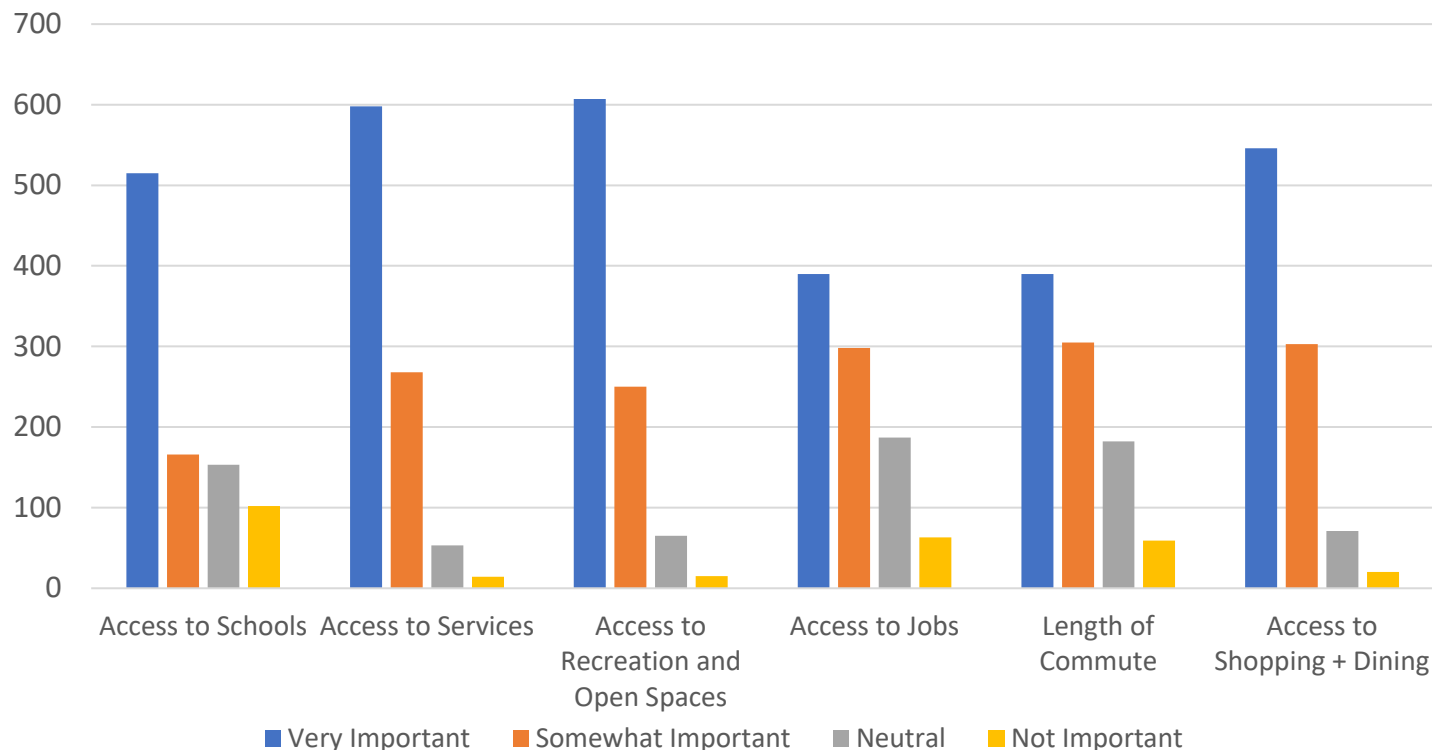
## Education Level of Respondent



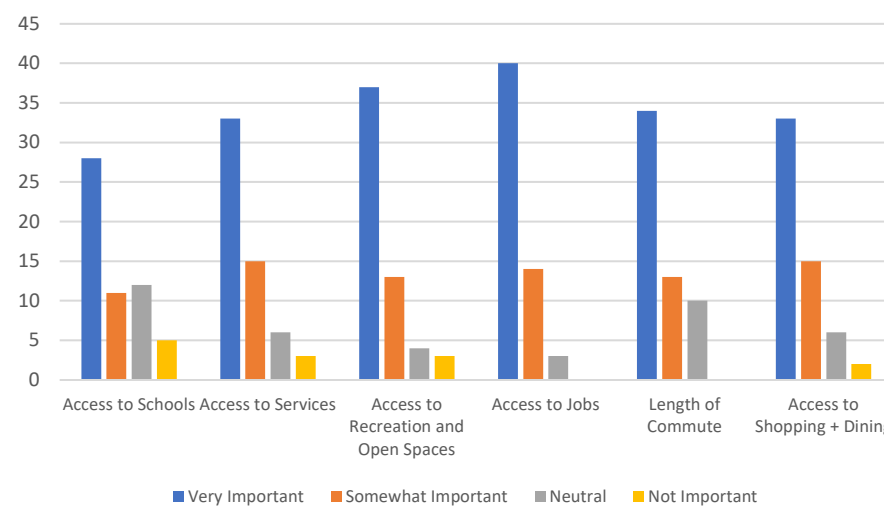


# Question 1. How important are the following characteristics in choosing where you live?

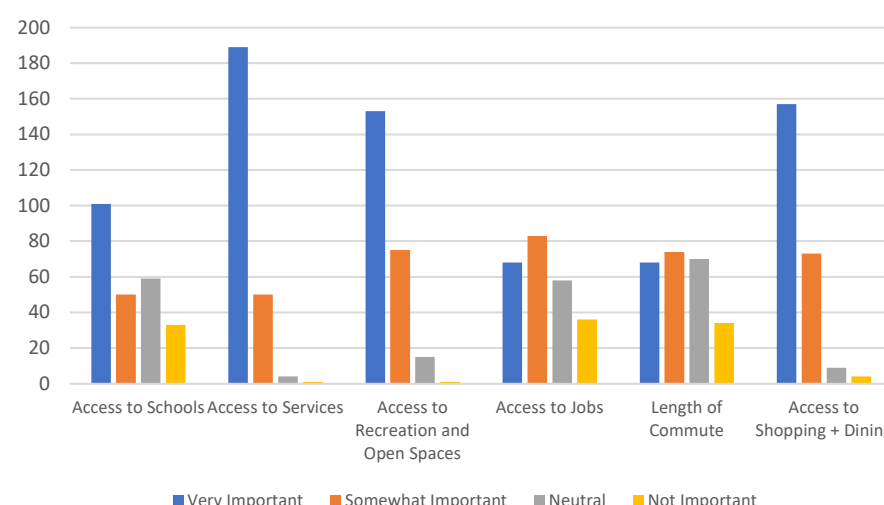
### All Responses



### Age 18 to 29



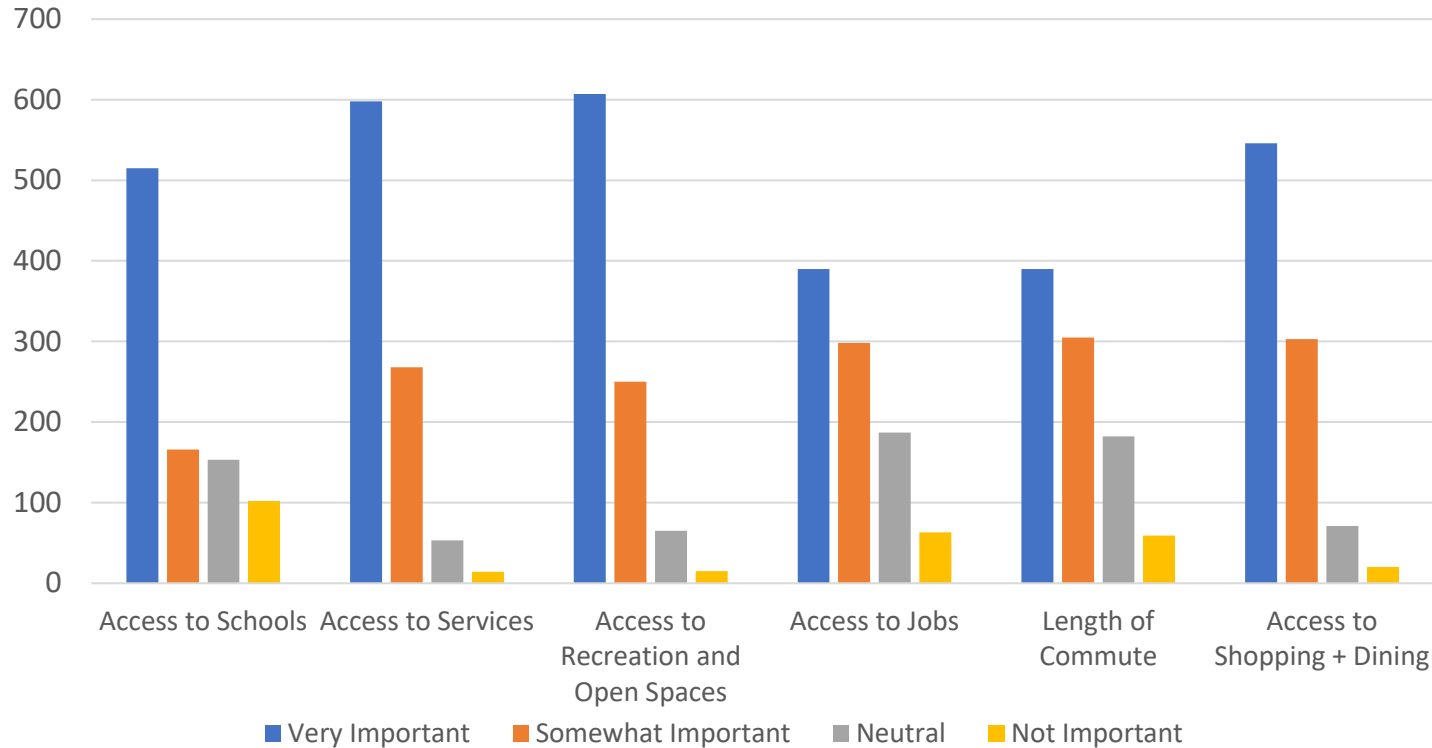
### Age 65+



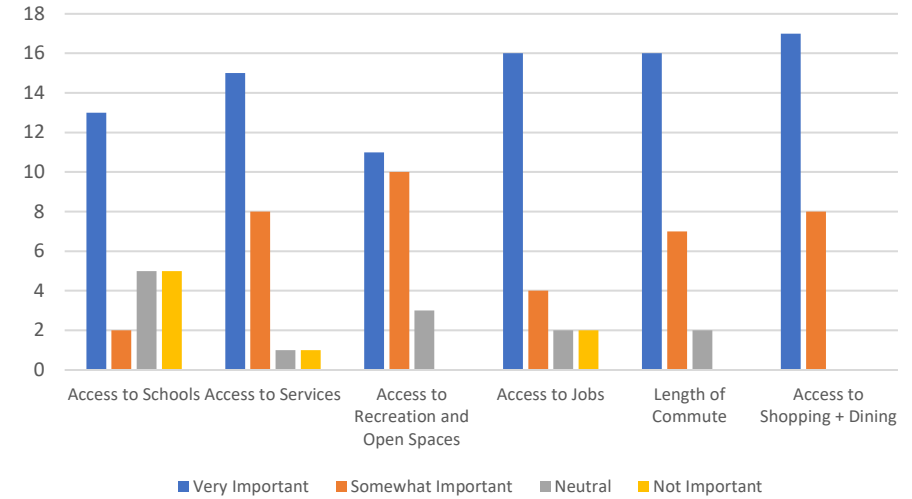


# Question 1. How important are the following characteristics in choosing where you live?

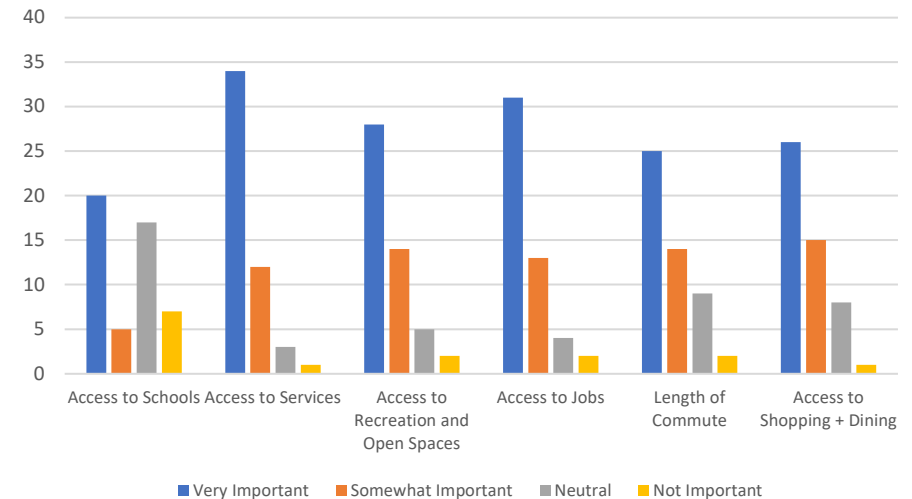
## All Responses



## Work in Mentor, Live Elsewhere



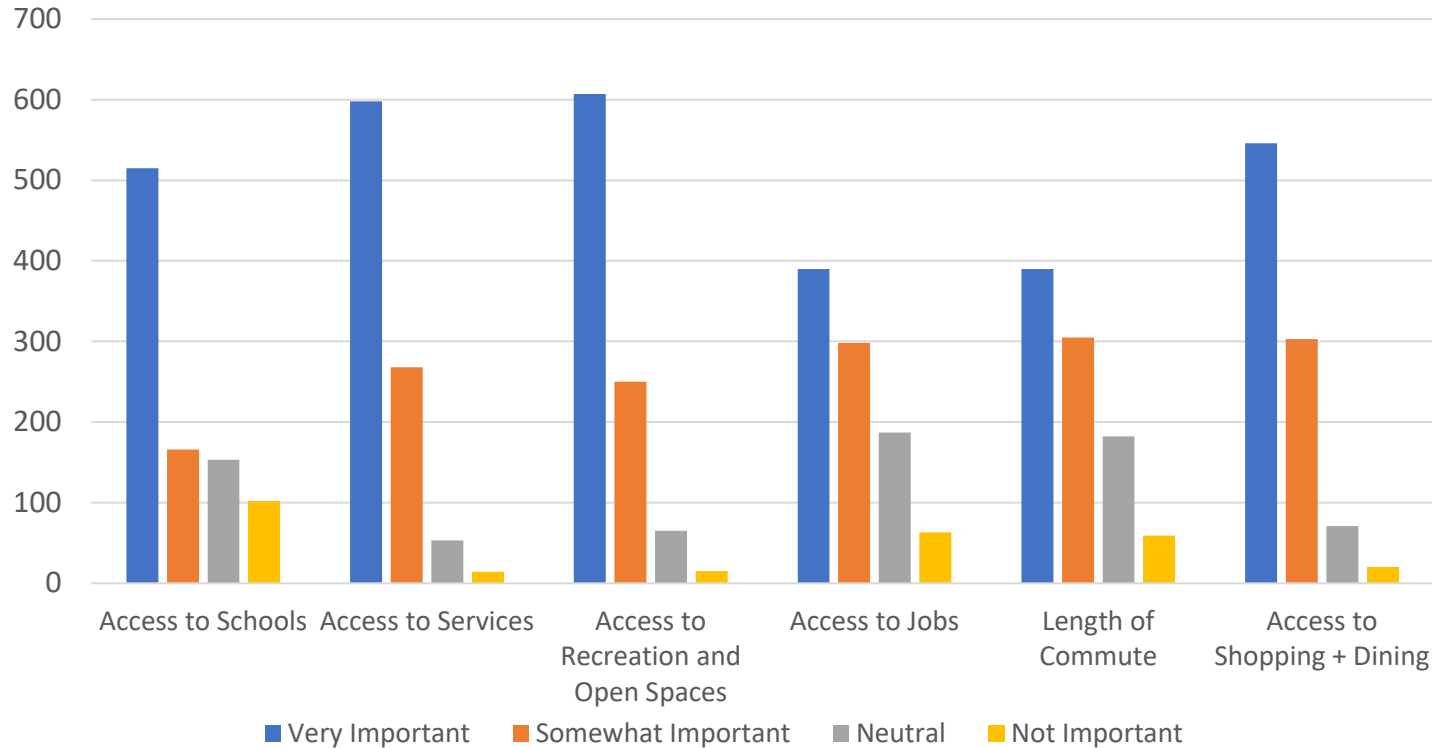
## Renter Households



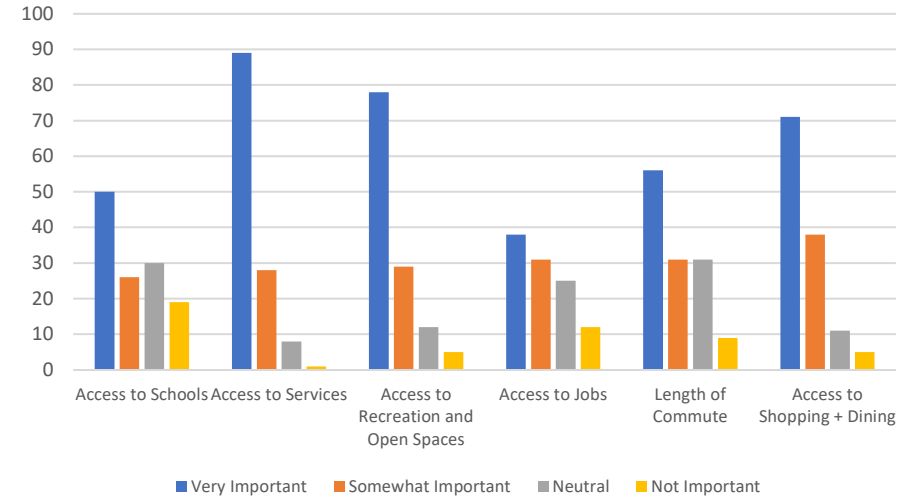


# Question 1. How important are the following characteristics in choosing where you live?

### All Responses



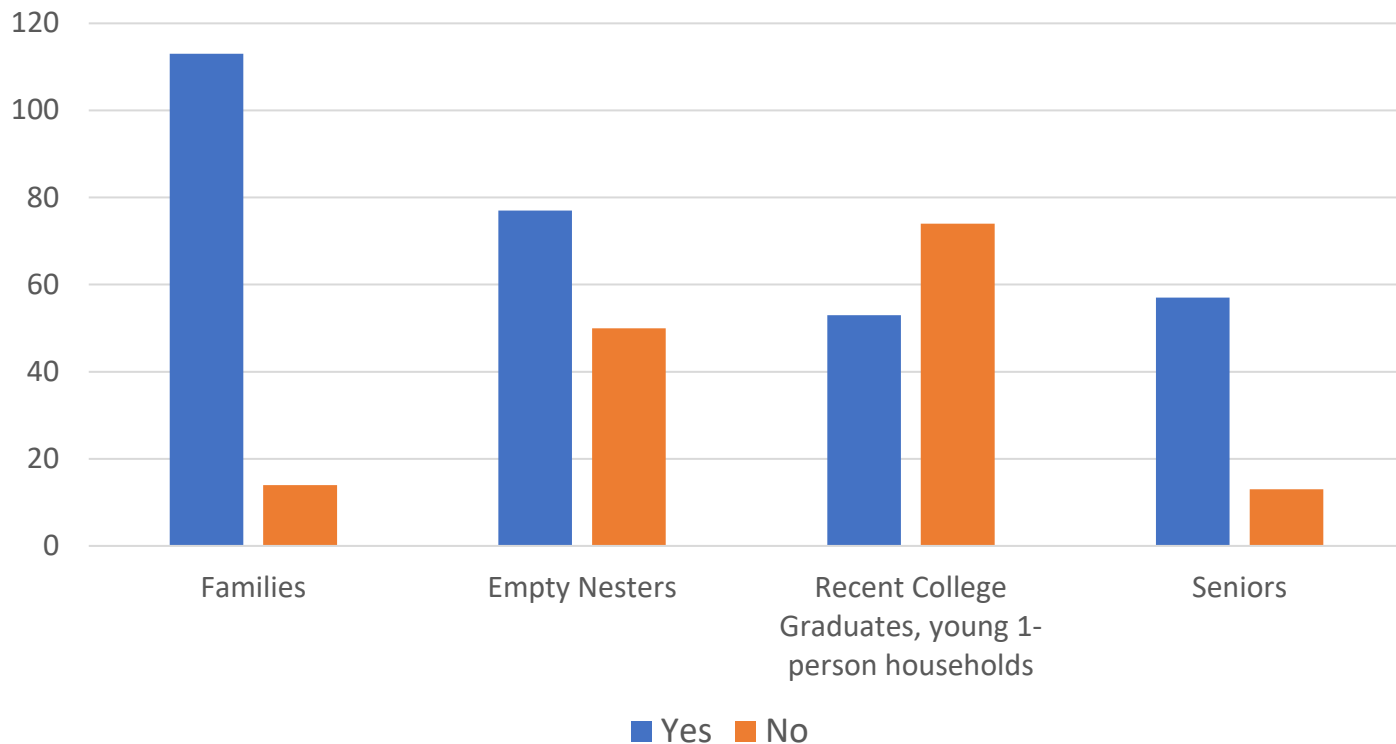
### Earn \$55,000 or Less



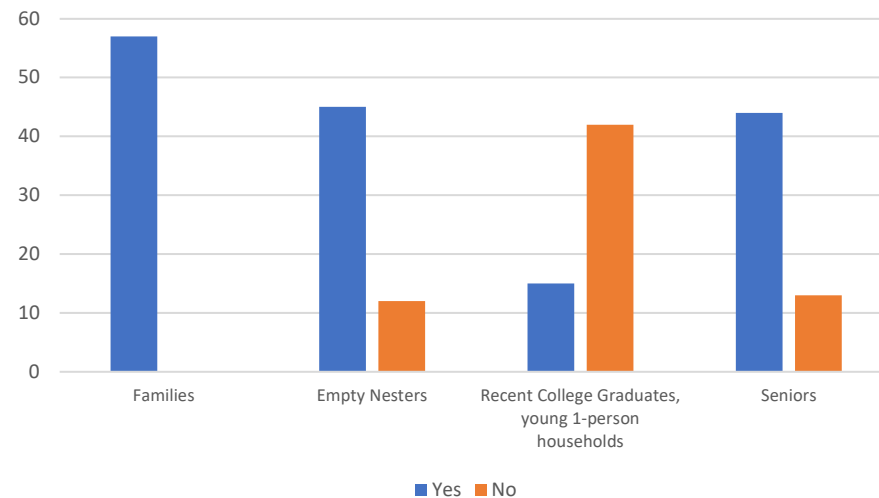


# Question 2. Does Mentor have enough of the right kinds of housing to serve the following community populations?

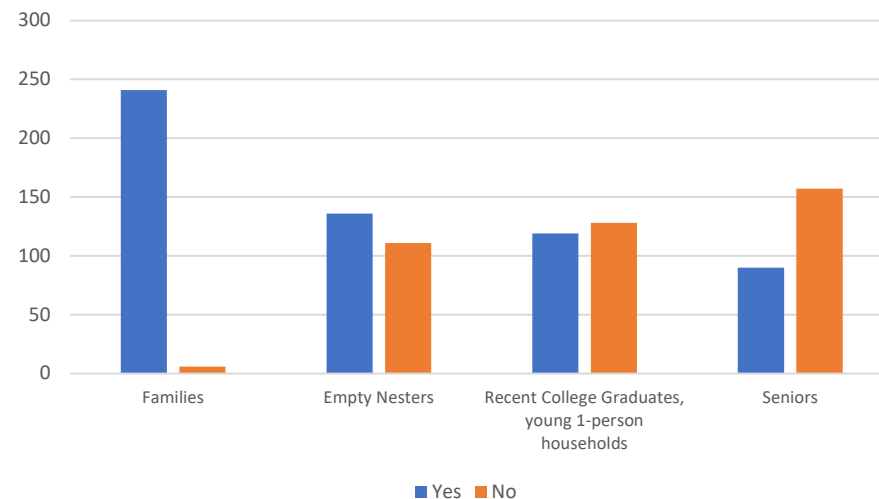
All Responses



Age 18 to 29



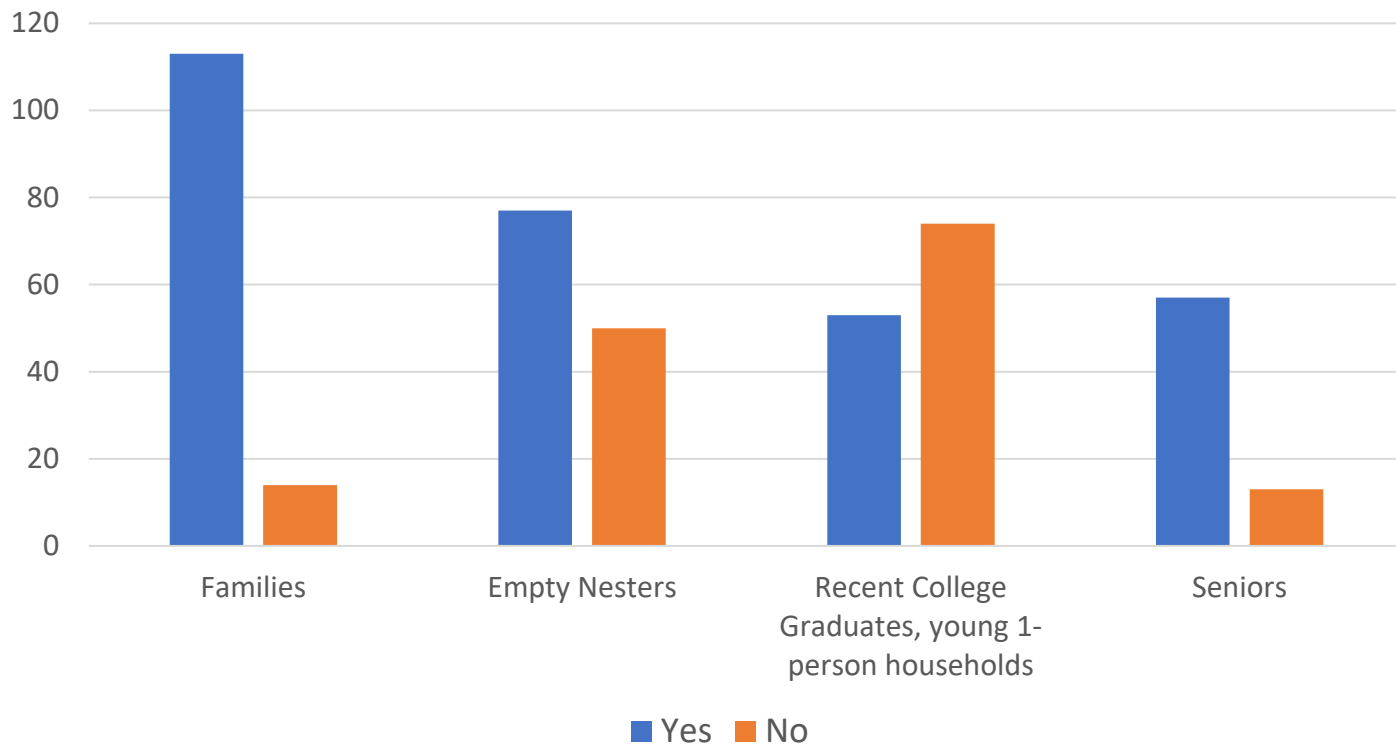
Age 65+



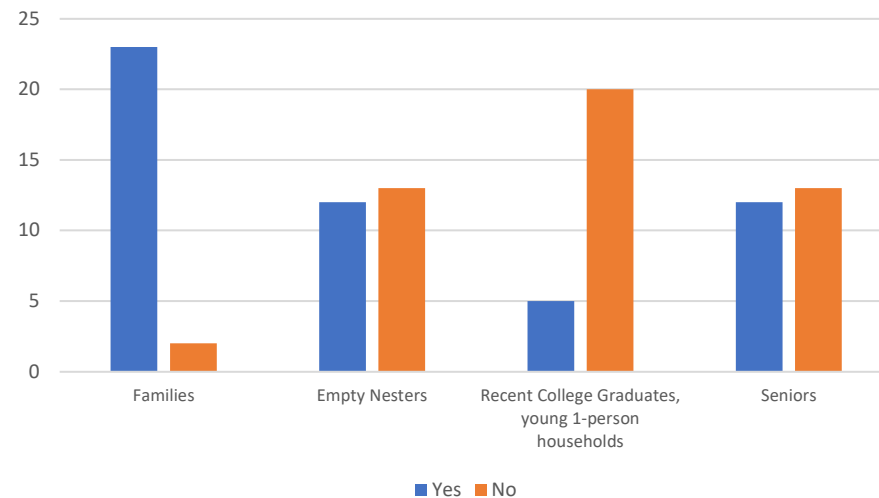


# Question 2. Does Mentor have enough of the right kinds of housing to serve the following community populations?

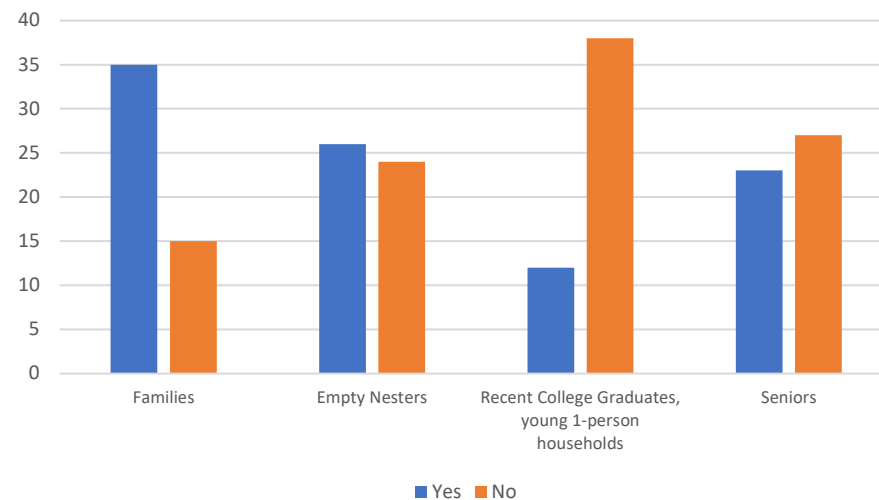
### All Responses



### Work in Mentor, Live Elsewhere



### Renter Households

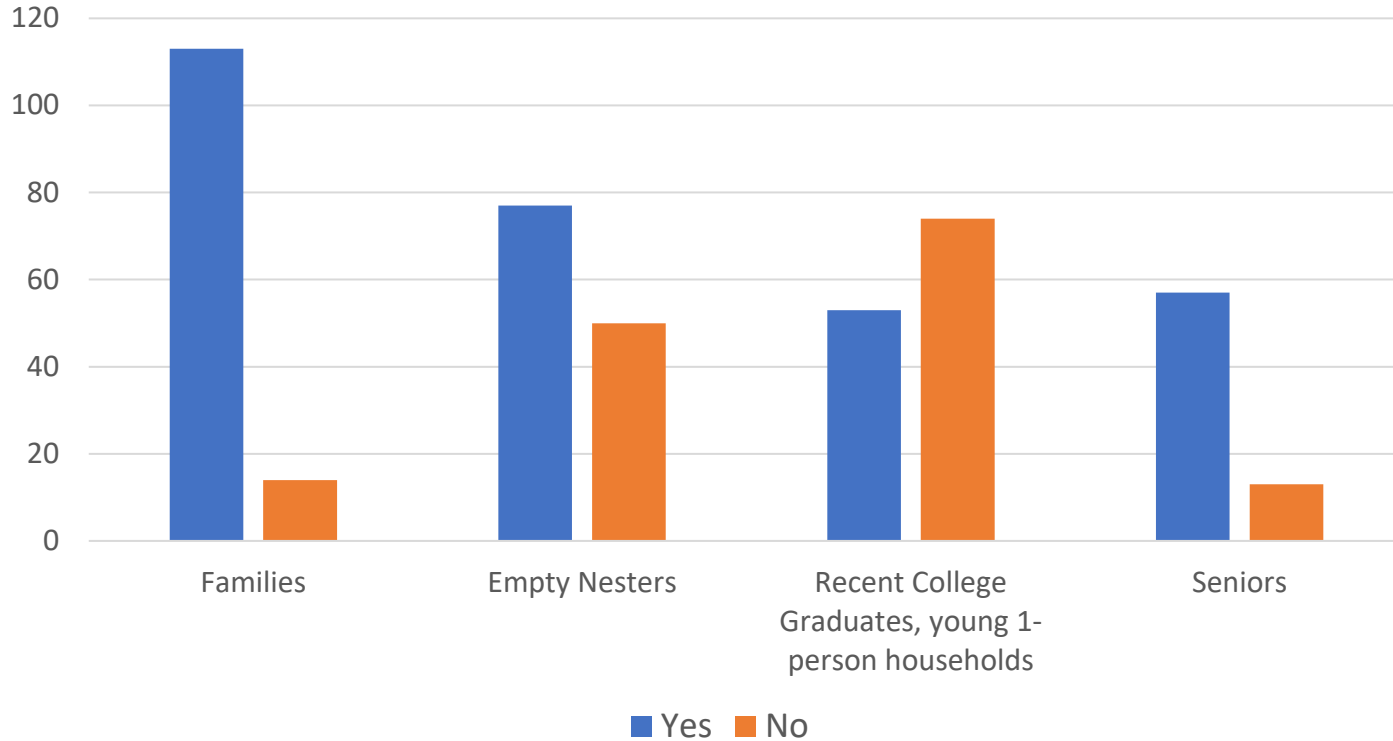




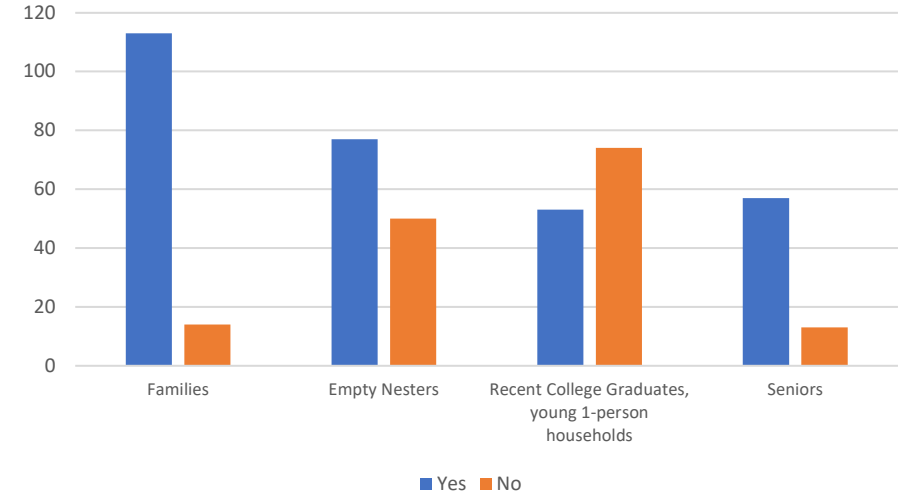


# Question 2. Does Mentor have enough of the right kinds of housing to serve the following community populations?

All Responses



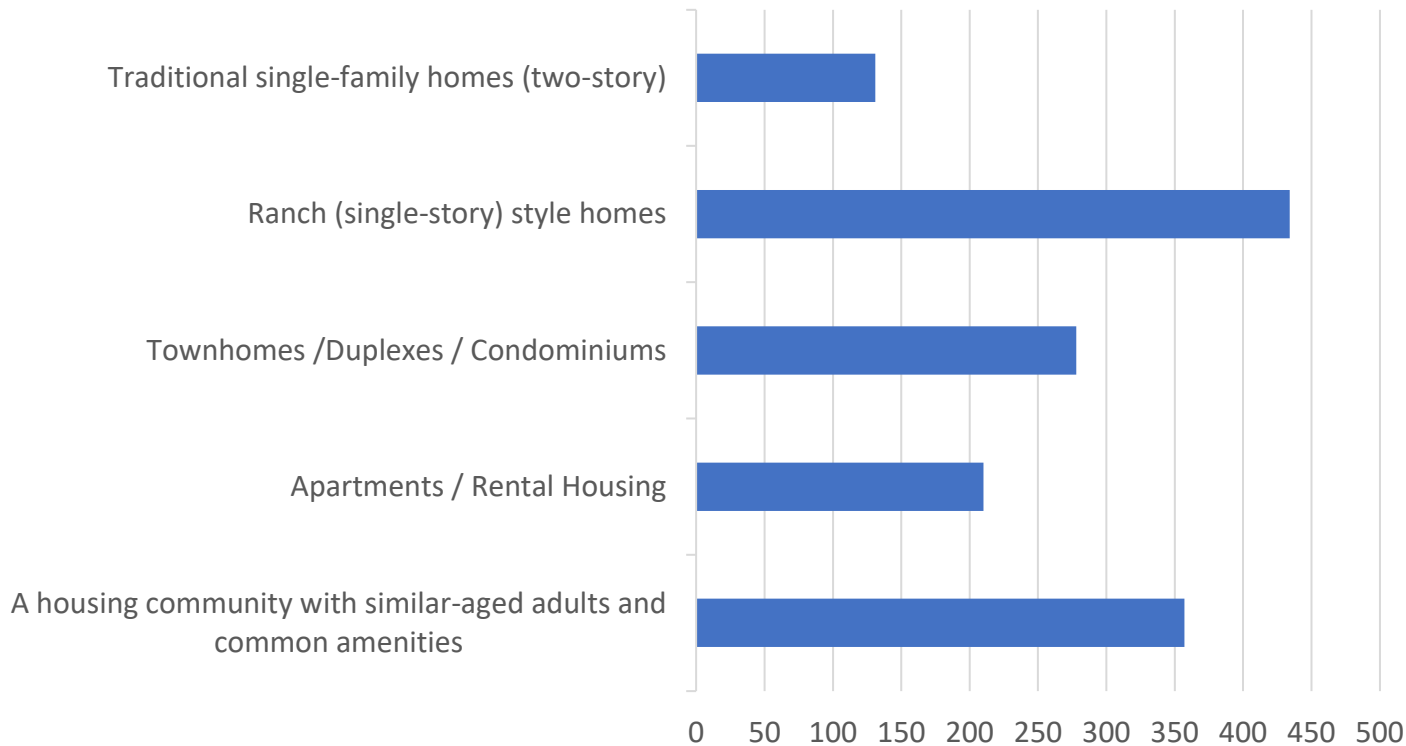
Earn \$55,000 or Less



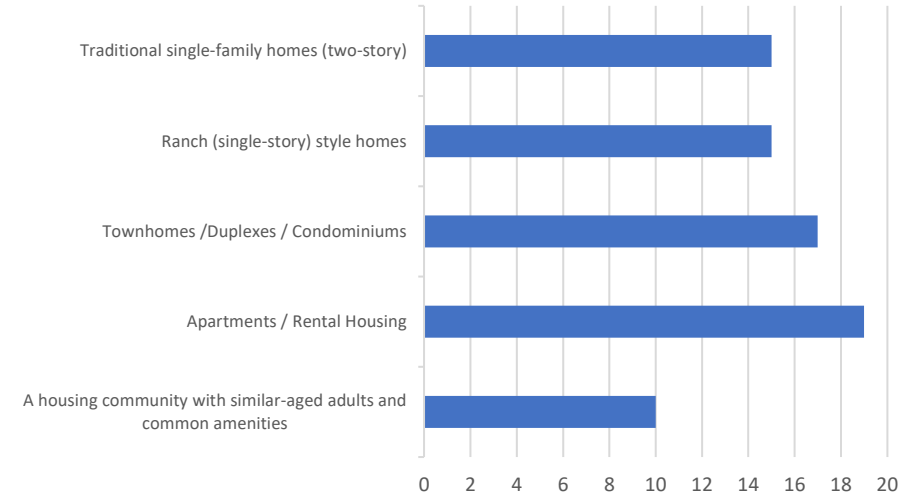


# Question 3. If you answered no to any of the above in the last question, what types of housing do you think Mentor needs more of?

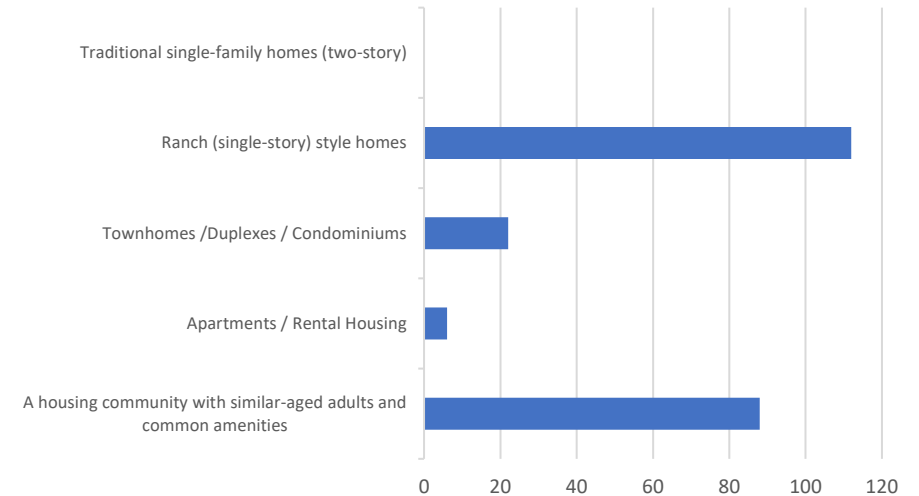
## All Responses



## Age 18 to 29



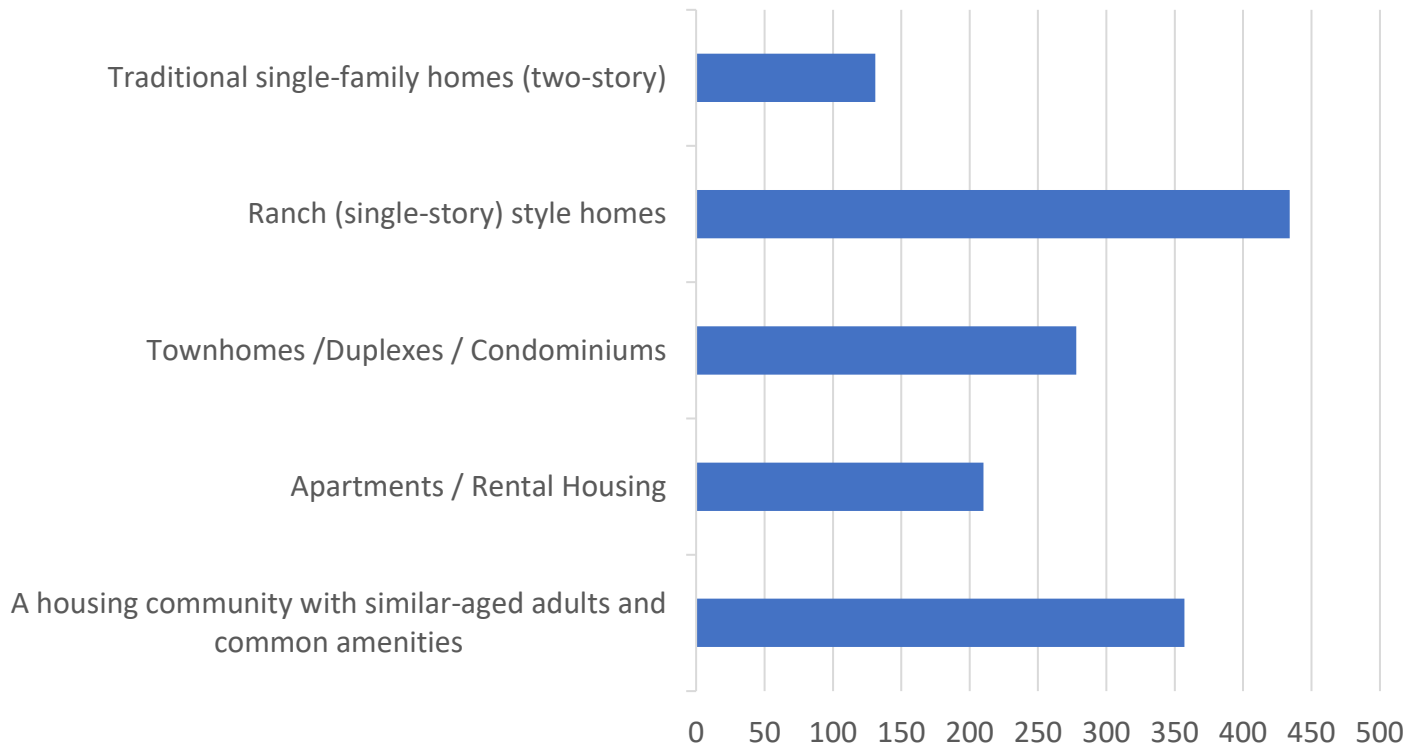
## Age 65+



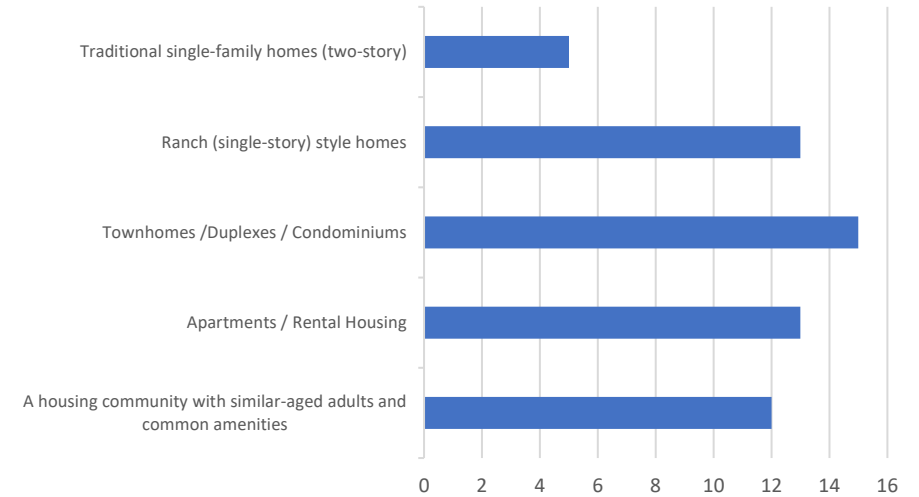


# Question 3. If you answered no to any of the above in the last question, what types of housing do you think Mentor needs more of?

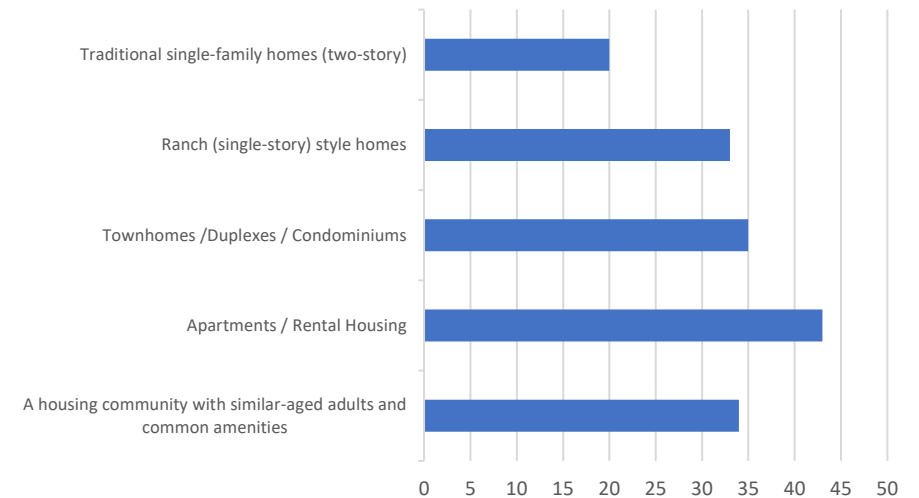
## All Responses



## Work in Mentor, Live Elsewhere



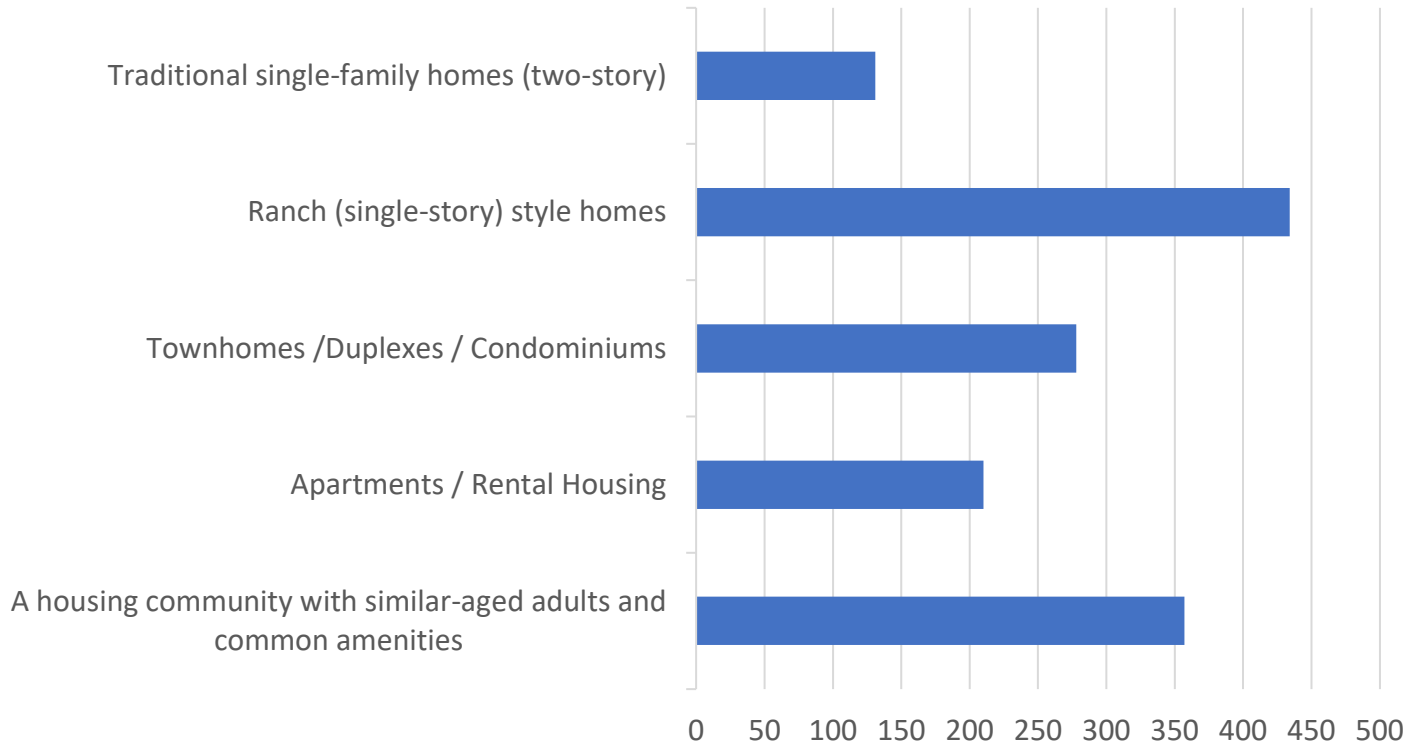
## Renter Households



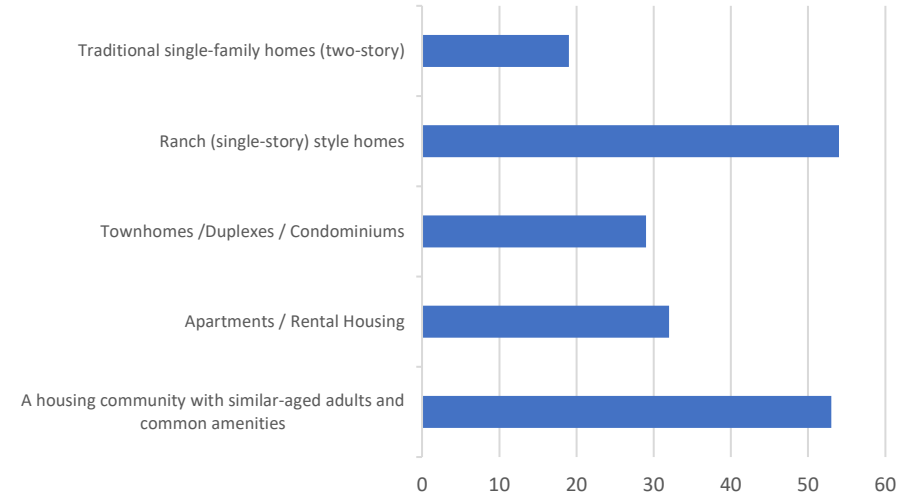


# Question 3. If you answered no to any of the above in the last question, what types of housing do you think Mentor needs more of?

## All Responses



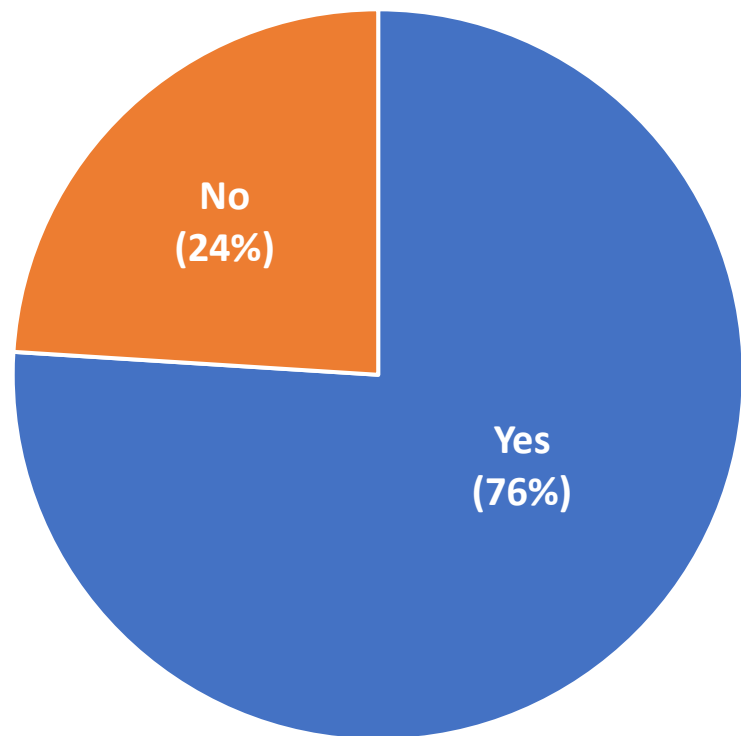
## Earn \$55,000 or Less



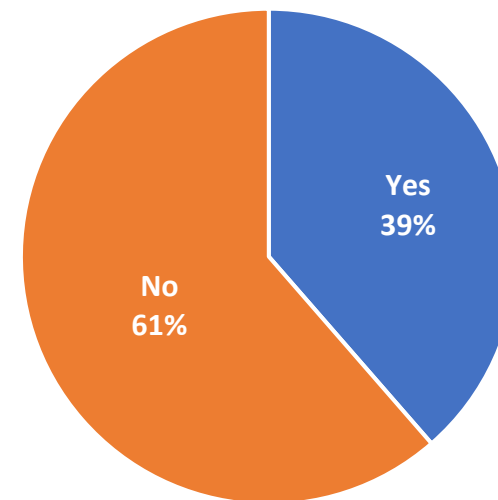


## Question 4. Are you able to afford the housing of your choice? (housing affordable is defined as costing 30% or less of your household income)

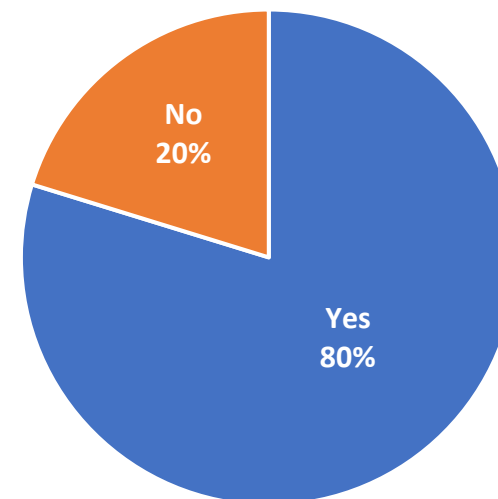
All Responses



Age 18 to 29



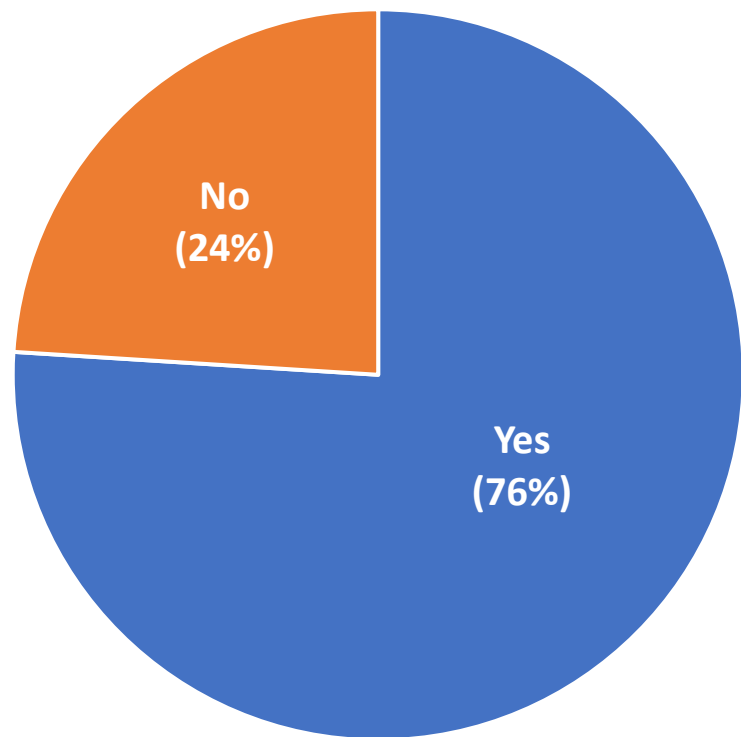
Age 65+



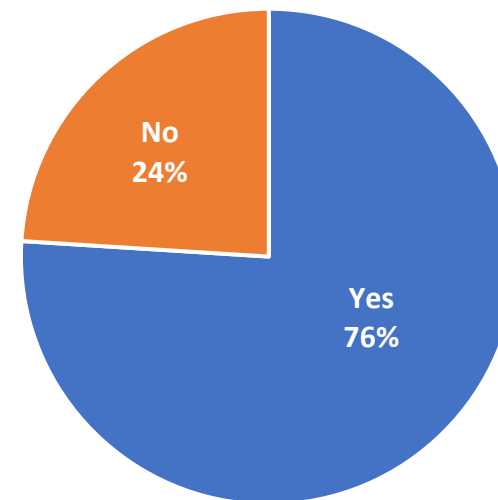


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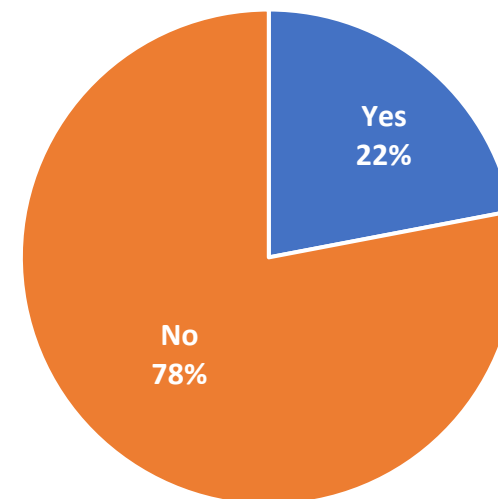
All Responses



Work in Mentor, Live Elsewhere



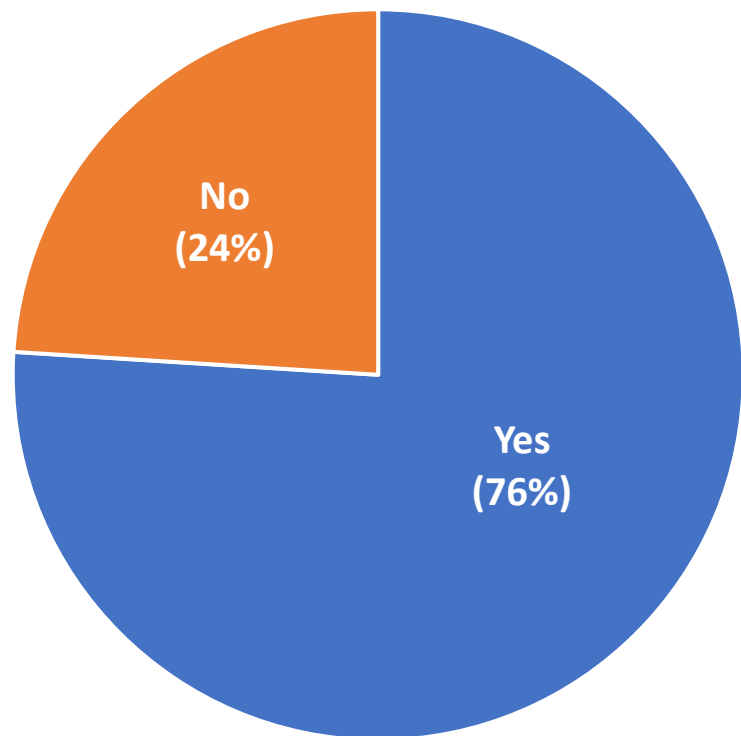
Renter Households



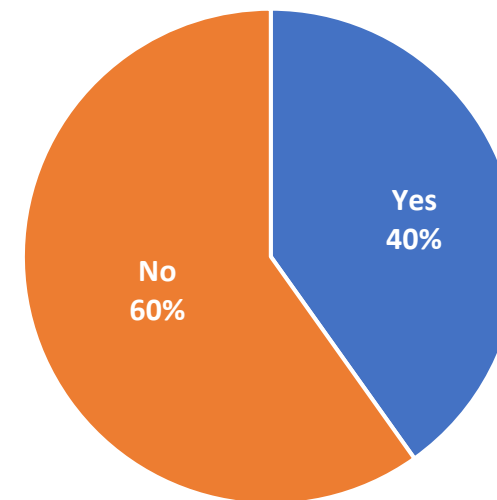


## Question 4. Are you able to afford the housing of your choice? (housing affordable is defined as costing 30% or less of your household income)

All Responses



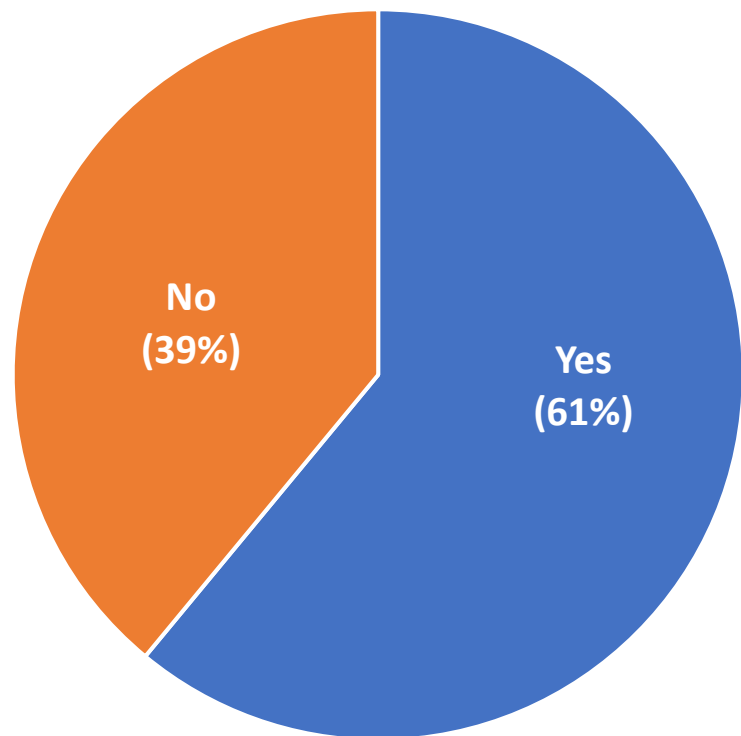
Earn \$55,000 or Less



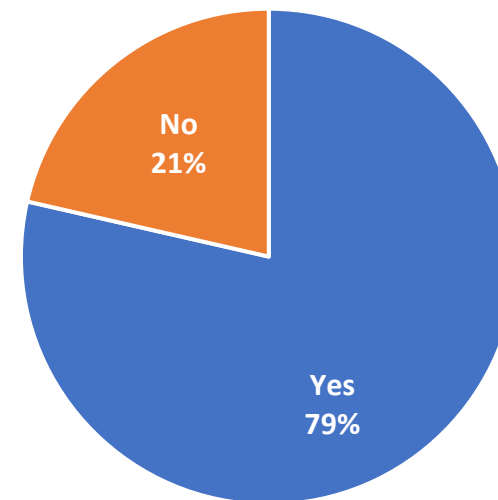


## Question 5. Do you have family or friends who struggle to afford the housing of their choice?

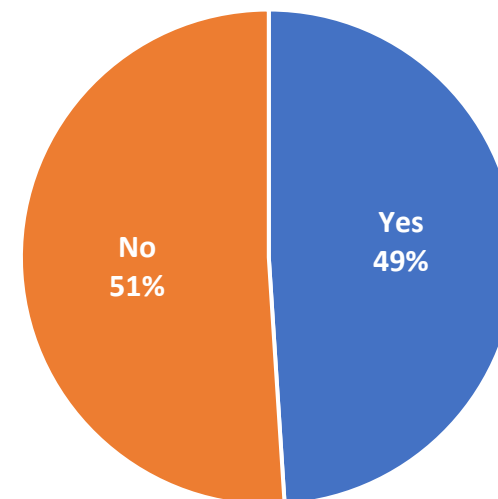
All Responses



Age 18 to 29



Age 65+

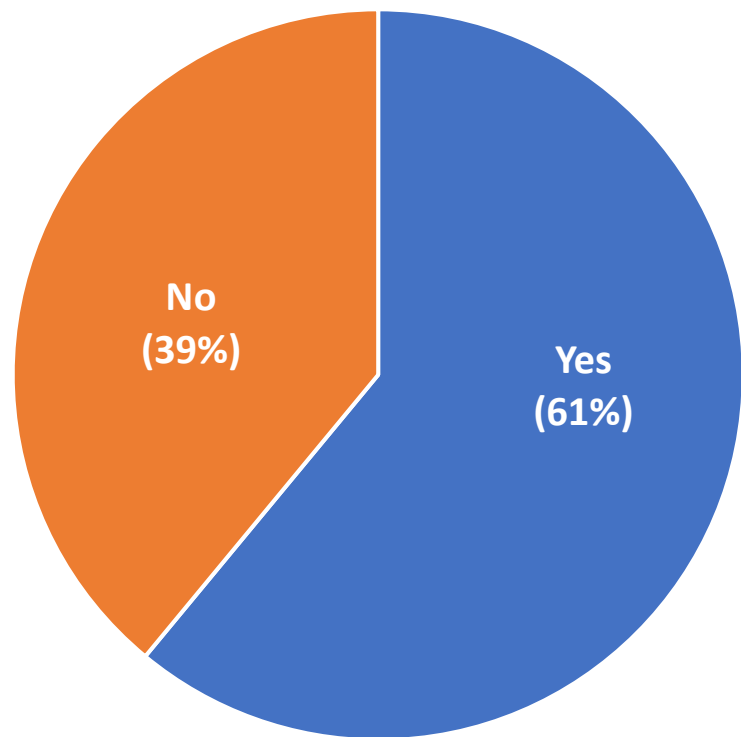




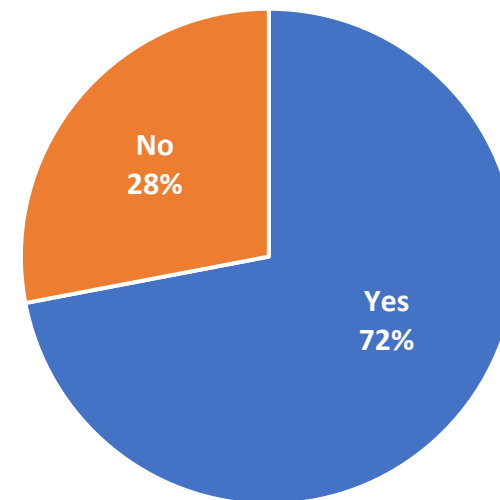


# Question 5. Do you have family or friends who struggle to afford the housing of their choice?

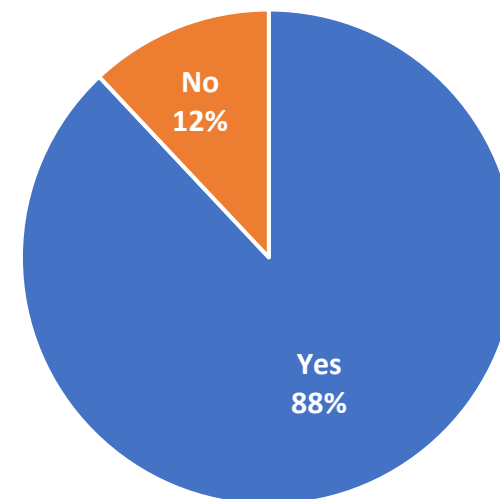
All Responses



Work in Mentor, Live Elsewhere



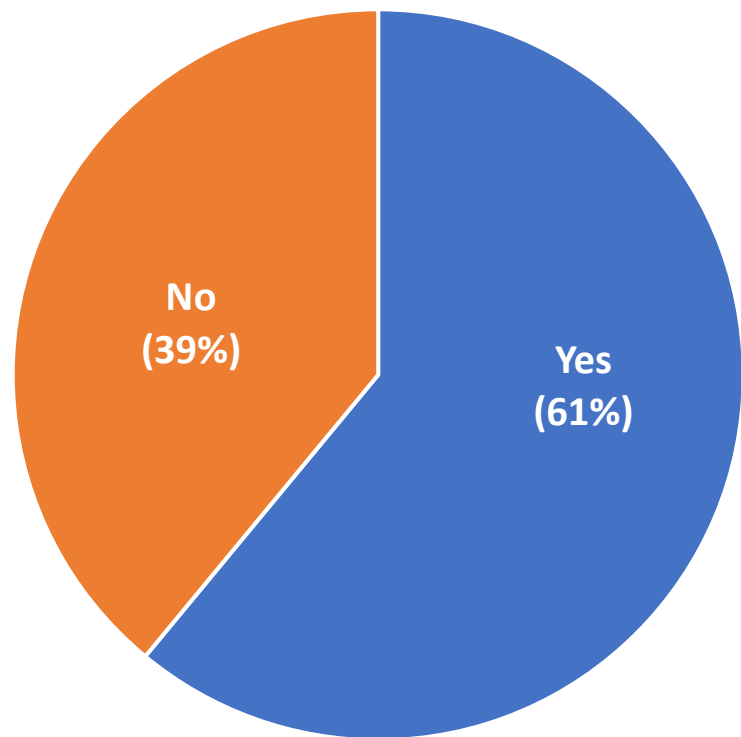
Renter Households



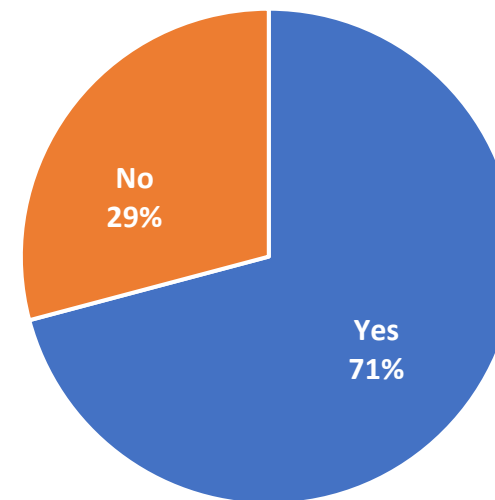


# Question 5. Do you have family or friends who struggle to afford the housing of their choice?

All Responses



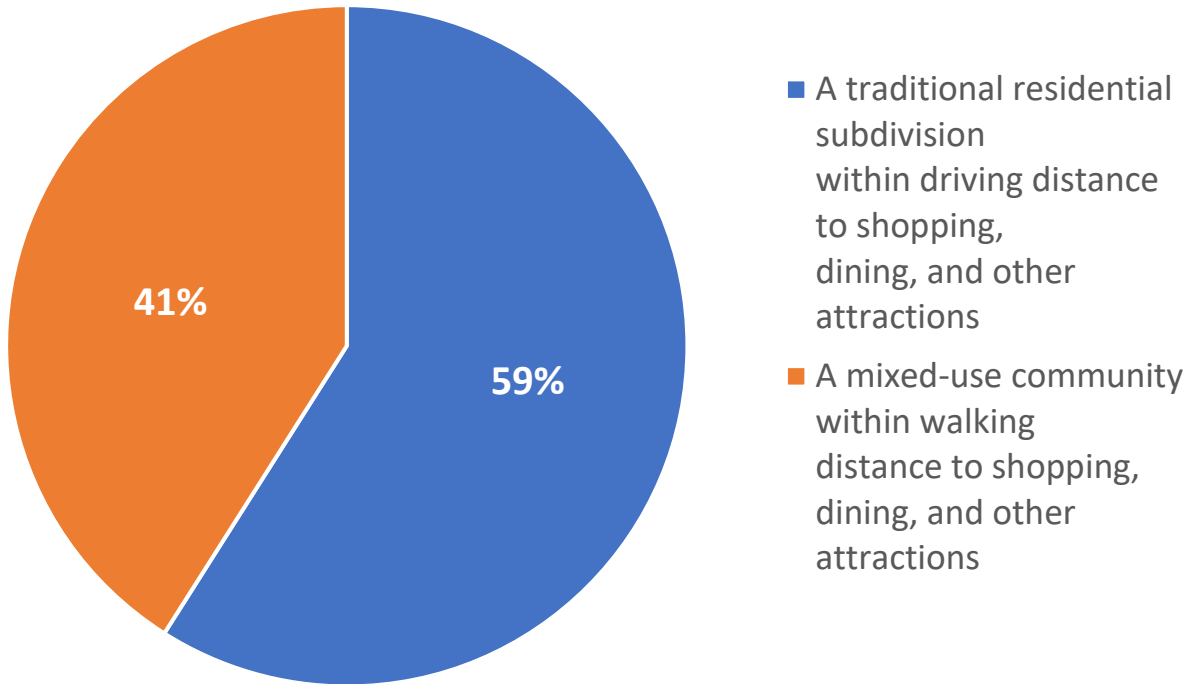
Earn \$55,000 or Less



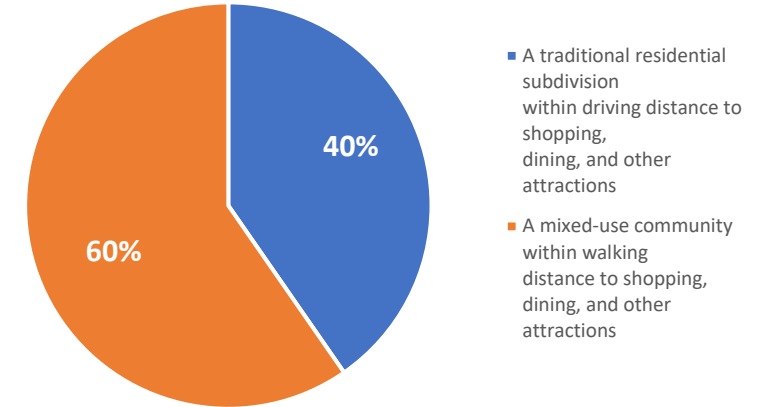


# Question 6. Which would you prefer if living in Mentor?

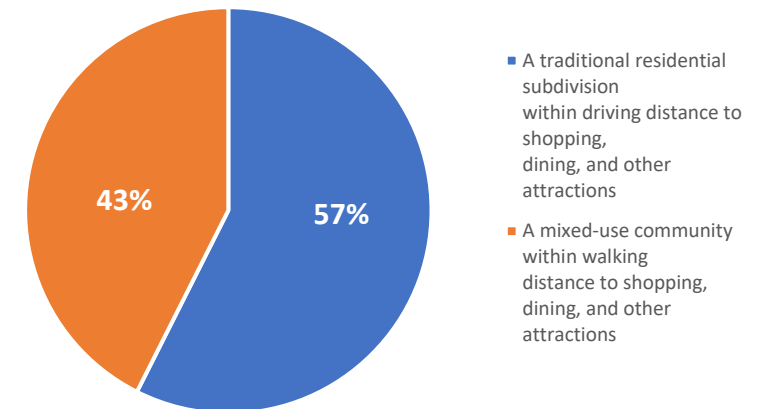
All Responses



Age 18 to 29



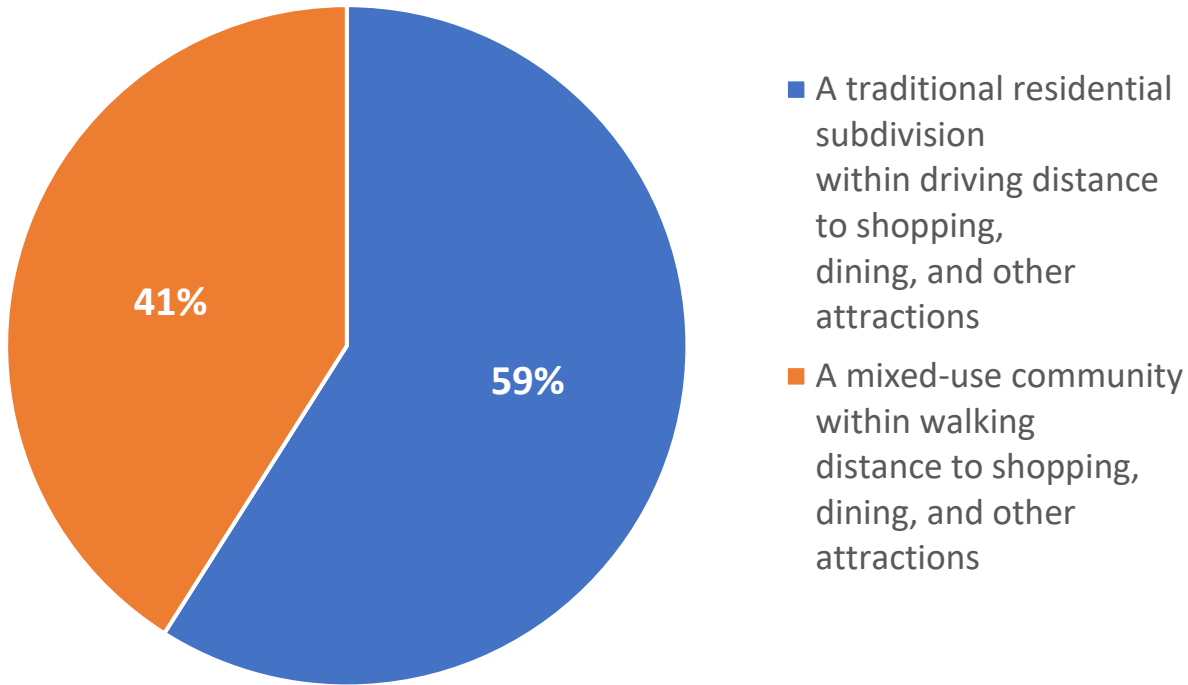
Age 65+



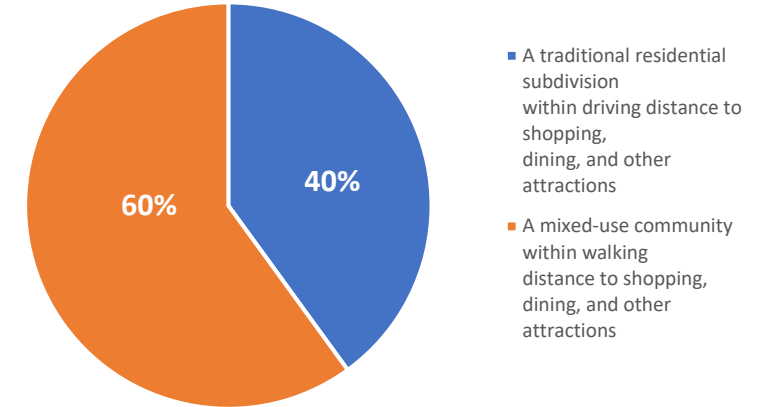


# Question 6. Which would you prefer if living in Mentor?

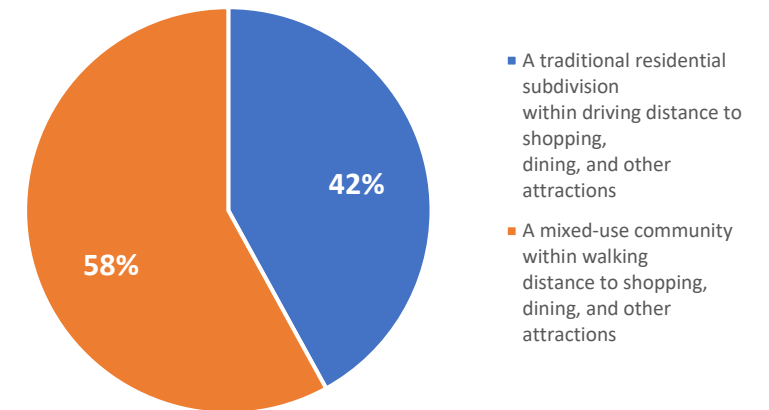
### All Responses



### Work in Mentor, Live Elsewhere



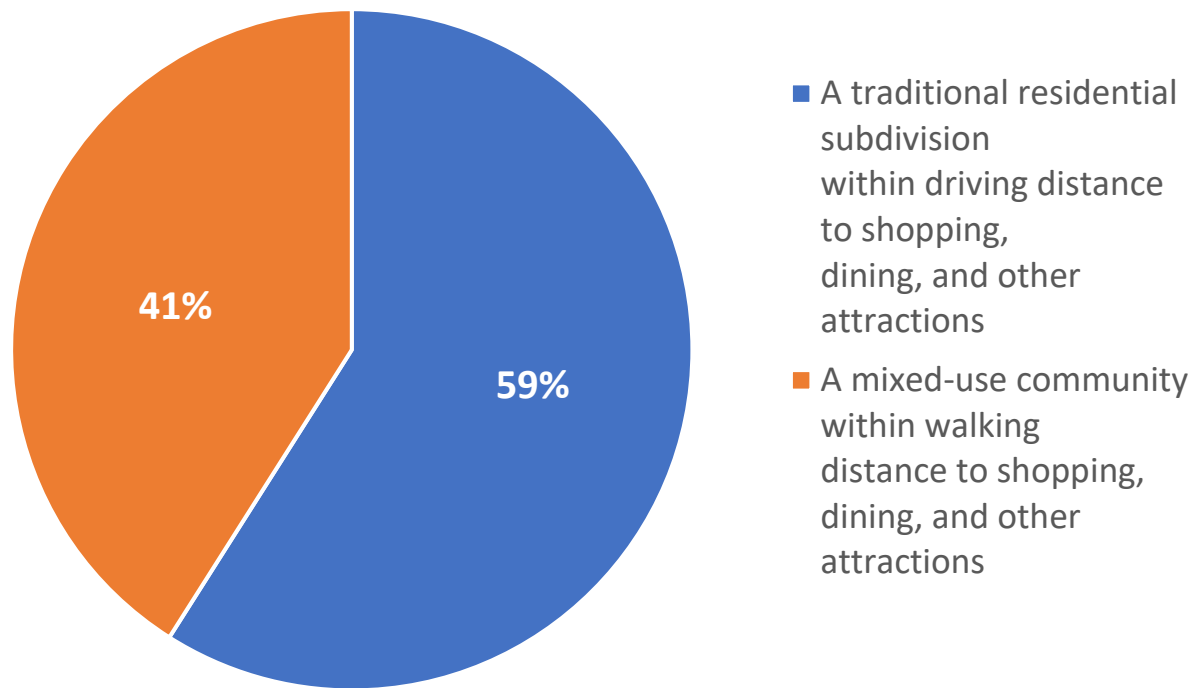
### Renter Households



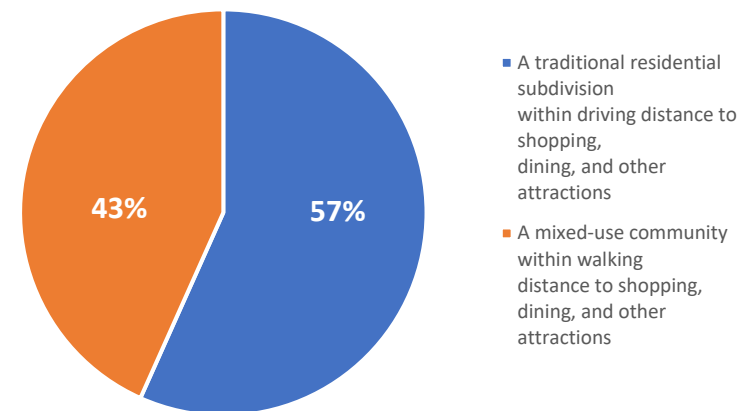


# Question 6. Which would you prefer if living in Mentor?

All Responses



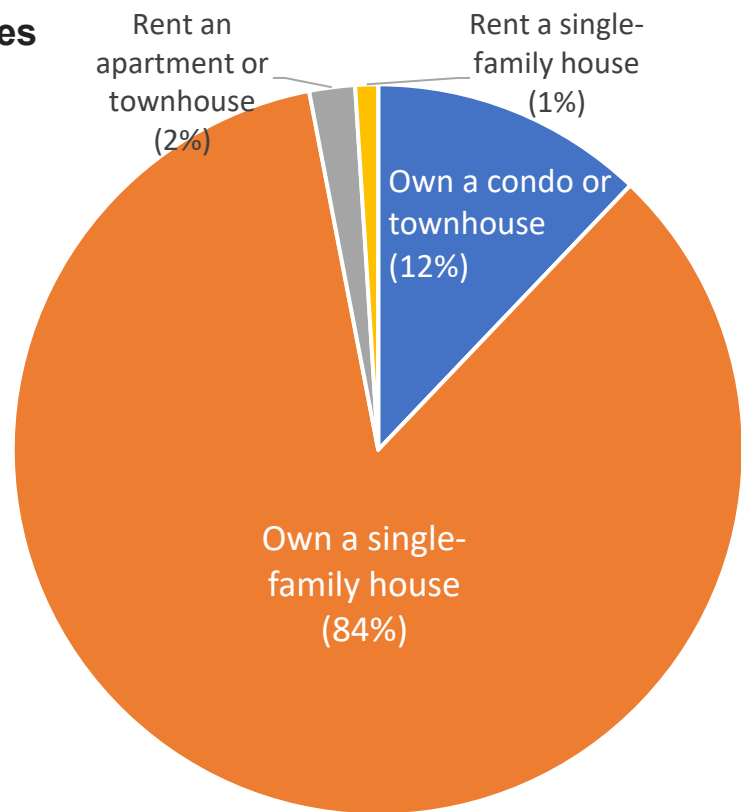
Earn \$55,000 or Less



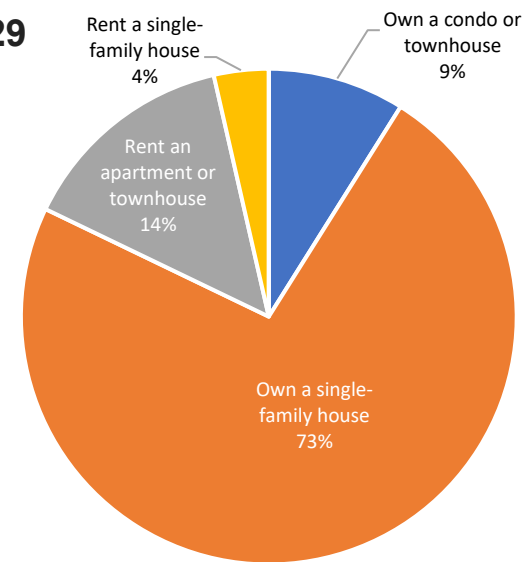


# Question 7. Which housing and ownership type would you prefer?

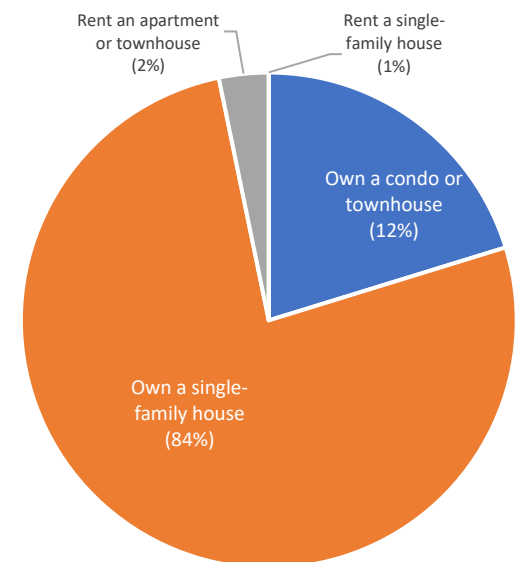
All Responses



Age 18 to 29



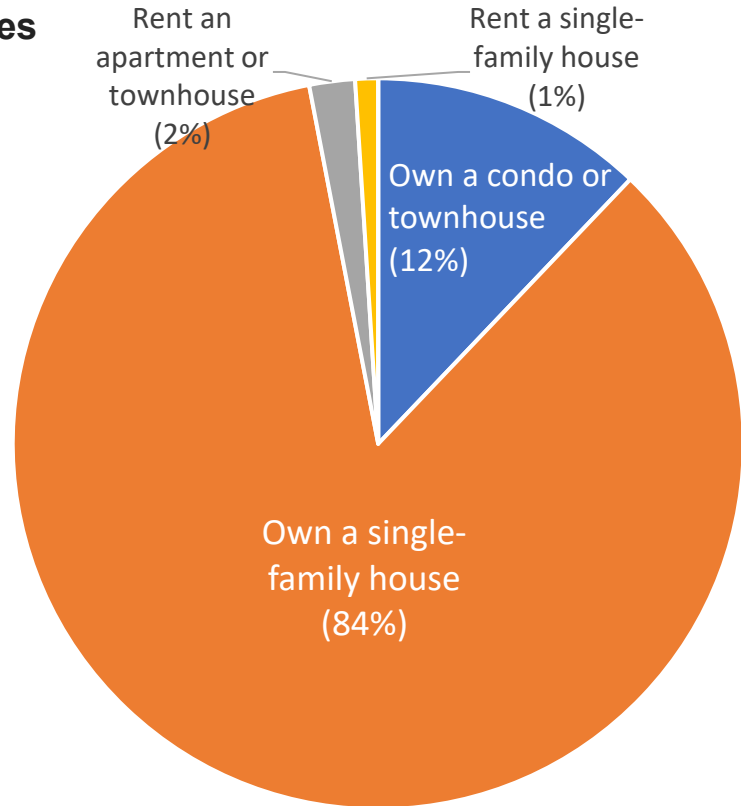
Age 65+



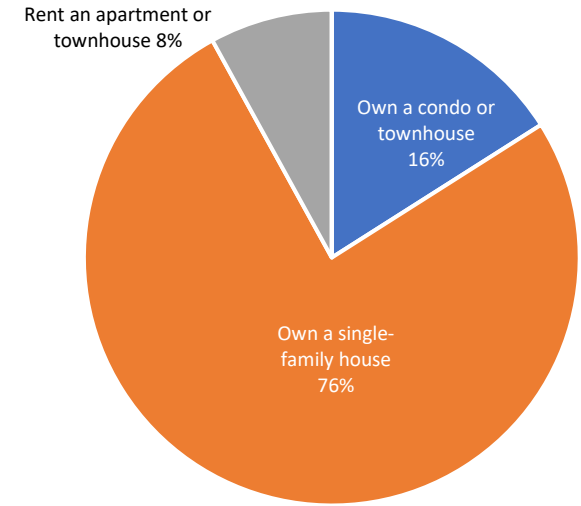


# Question 7. Which housing and ownership type would you prefer?

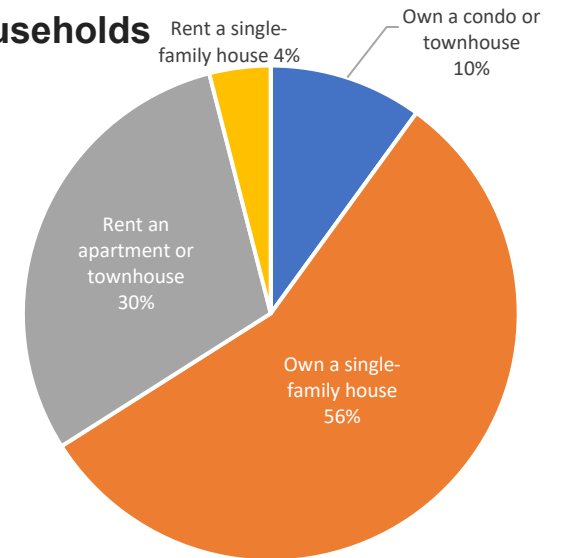
All Responses



Work in Mentor, Live Elsewhere



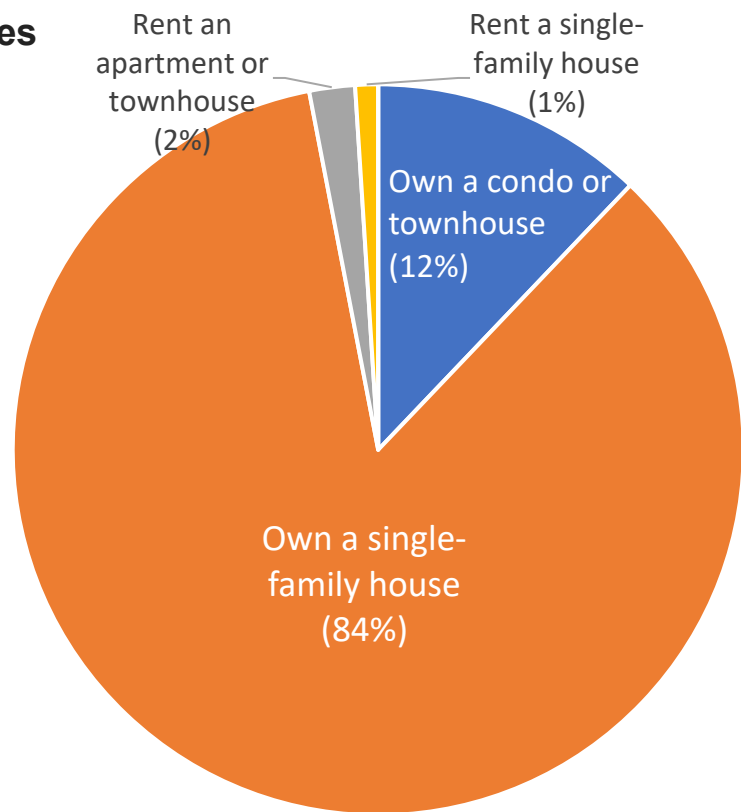
Renter Households



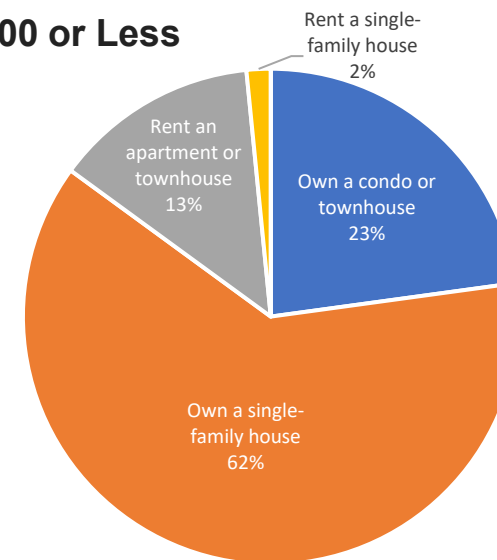


# Question 7. Which housing and ownership type would you prefer?

All Responses

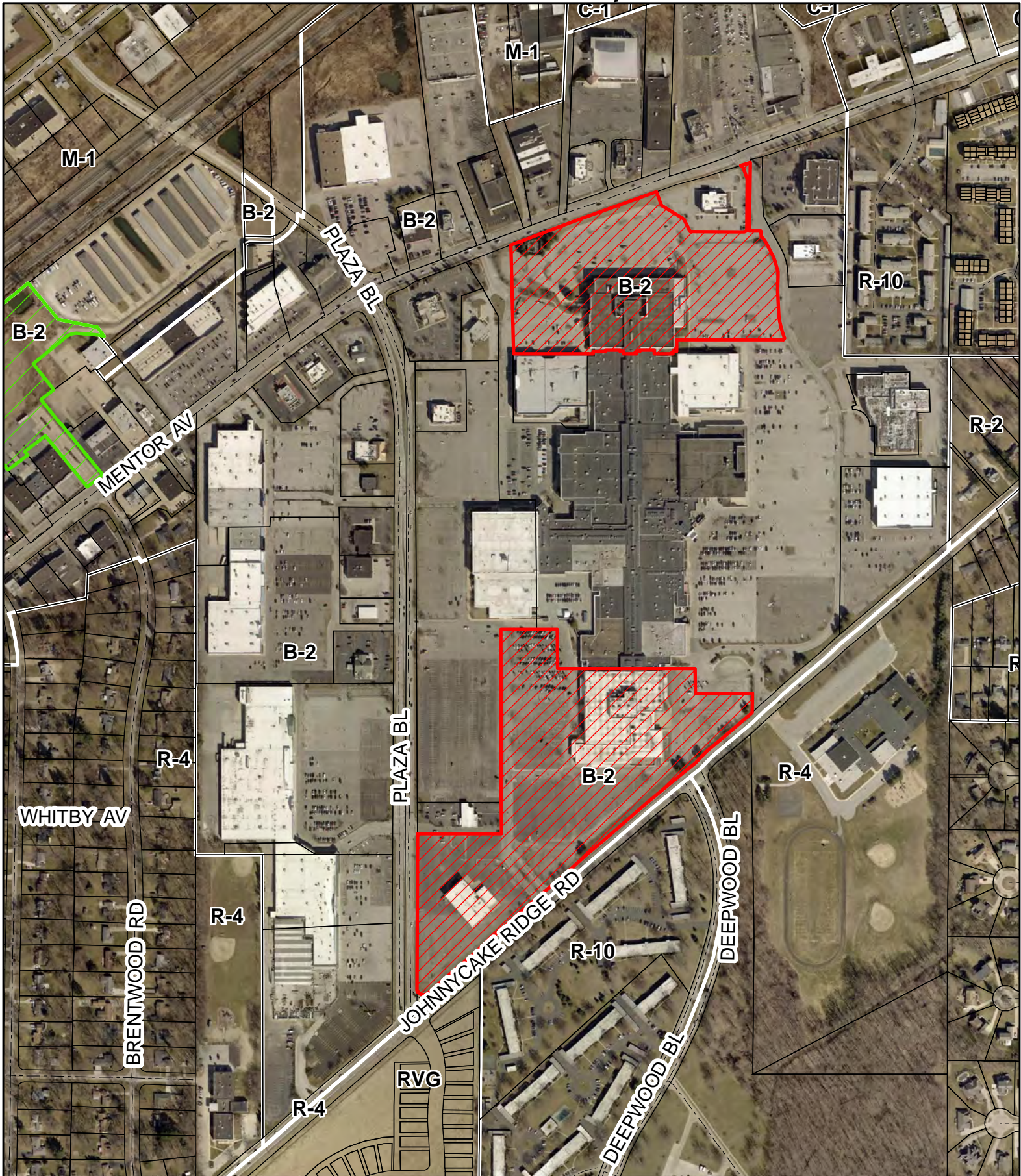


Earn \$55,000 or Less





# Great Lakes Mall Properties



Scale: 1" = 500'

Prepared by the City of Mentor  
Department of Planning & Development

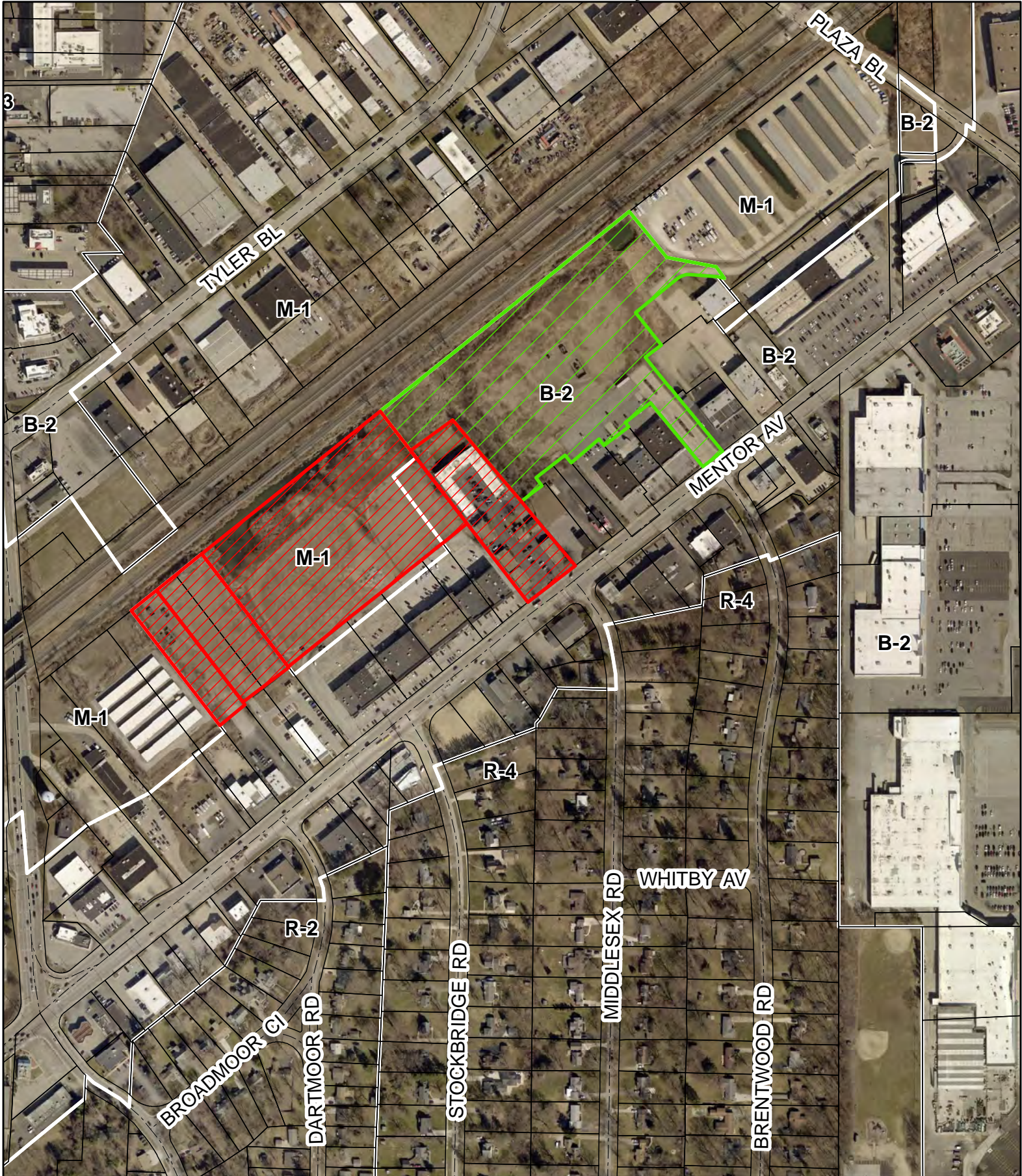
V:\Planning\Projects\Housing Study\Great Lakes Mall Area.mxd



Underutilized Parcels (30 Acres)

City of Mentor Parcel (10 Acres)

# Mentor Avenue Rear Properties



Scale: 1" = 400'

Prepared by the City of Mentor  
Department of Planning & Development

V:\Planning\Projects\Housing Study\Bottom Lands Area.mxd



Underutilized Parcels (13 Acres)

City of Mentor Parcel (10 Acres)

# Southwest Mentor Avenue Properties



Scale: 1" = 300'

Prepared by the City of Mentor  
Department of Planning & Development

V:\Planning\Projects\Housing Study\Points East Area.mxd



Underutilized Parcels (20 Acres)

City of Mentor Parcel

# Adkins Road Properties



Scale: 1" = 300'

Prepared by the City of Mentor  
Department of Planning & Development

V:\Planning\Projects\Housing Study\Adkins Road Area.mxd



Underutilized Parcels (21 Acres)

City of Mentor Parcel

# Southeast Mentor Avenue Property



Scale: 1" = 300'

Prepared by the City of Mentor  
Department of Planning & Development

V:\Planning\Projects\Housing Study\Walmart Area.mxd



Underutilized Parcels (10 Acres)



City of Mentor Parcel

# Lake Shore Boulevard Properties



Scale: 1" = 300'

Prepared by the City of Mentor  
Department of Planning & Development

V:\Planning\Projects\Housing Study\Paisley Farm Area.mxd



Underutilized Parcels (18 Acres)



City of Mentor Parcel (2.6 Acres)

# Old Mentor Properties





Scale: 1" = 204'

Prepared by the City of Mentor  
Department of Planning & Development

V:\Planning\Projects\Housing Study\Old Mentor Properties.mxd



-  Underutilized Parcels (6 Acres)
-  City of Mentor Parcel

# Shady Lane Properties





Scale: 1" = 200'

Prepared by the City of Mentor  
Department of Planning & Development

V:\Planning\Projects\Housing Study\Shady Lane Properties.mxd



-  Underutilized Parcels (4.6 Acres)
-  City of Mentor Parcel